# The Governance of Shropshire

# During the Civil War and Interregnum

# 1642-1660

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Chester

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By Isabel Jones

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Isabel Jones

## Abstract

Often considered as an insignificant, sleepy, rural backwater, the county of Shropshire has attracted little academic interest, particularly concerning the period covering the civil war and Interregnum. Recent studies on the county have concentrated solely on the military aspect of the conflict and have not ventured into the Commonwealth and Protectorate years, nor looked at the administration and the internal politics of the shire. Yet in the first months of the war, the county was seen by Charles I as being vital to his success given its location on the Welsh border and with good transport links to the neighbouring Marcher counties. Shrewsbury was the main rallying point for the crown, and many of the local gentry flocked to the town with donations for the royal coffers. From then, up until 1645, most the county was held for the crown, until the fall of Shrewsbury in 1645 signalled an end to royalist dominance.

This thesis is not an analysis of the causes of, or the actual events of, the war, as those matters are peripheral to this examination, being mentioned only briefly during the examination. It is, however, a full analysis of both county society and government, and will consider local issues, some of which had a wide-ranging effect, finances, justice and religion. But, most importantly, it will examine the personnel involved in both local and central government, how they changed over the period according to their allegiance and who was in power, and whether in the aftermath of war former royalists were welcomed back into the Commission of the Peace and other local committees to resume what they saw as being their rightful place in society.

The academic study of the county is not a unique concept, having been promoted by Professor Alan Everitt in the 1960s in his study of Kent. In that research, Everitt proposed the concept of the county community, whereby the insular gentry were more interested in local affairs than national issues, and very much resented any interference from central government into what they considered was their domain. This thesis is not an attempt to try and slot Shropshire into that category, for Everitt's argument has long been considered void. However, the basic framework of research into the county community that many academics have used in the past will be utilised to a certain extent, and the findings compared as much as possible with other neighbouring counties to try and ascertain whether there were any peculiarities within this Marcher society.

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| *A & O* | *the Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum 1642-1660,* Volumes 1 and 2 (London, 1911), eds, C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait |
| BCHC | Bishop's Castle Heritage Centre |
| BodL | Bodleian Library |
| BL | British Library |
| *CCC* | *Calendar of the Committee for Compounding,* Parts 1-5, 1643-1659 (London, 1889-1892), ed., Mary Anne Everett Green |
| *CCAM* | *Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Advance of Money,* Parts 1-3 (London, 1888), ed., Mary Anne Everett Green |
| *CCSP* | *Calendar of the Clarendon State Papers preserved in the Bodleian Library,* Volume II, Volume IV (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1810 and 1869), eds, Rev. W. Dunn Macray and F. J. Routledge. |
| *CSPD* | *Calendar of State Papers (Domestic),* Charles I, 1641-1649, (London, 1887-1897), eds, William Douglas Hamilton and Sophie Crawford Lomas |
| | *Calendar of State Papers,* Charles II, 1660-1661 (London, 1860), ed., Mary Anne Everett Green |
| | *Calendar of State Papers,* James I, 1619-1623 (London, 1858), ed., Mary Anne Everett Green |

| | |
|---|---|
| | *Calendar of State Papers,* Interregnum, 1649-1660 (London, 1875-1886), ed., Mary Anne Everett Green |
| *CJ* | *Journal of the House of Commons*: Volumes 2-8, 1640-1667 (London, 1802) |
| *HJ* | *Journal of the House of Lords*: Volumes 4-11, 1629-1666 (London, 1767-1830) |
| *HV* | George Grazebrook, and John Paul Rylands, eds, *The Visitation of Shropshire taken in the year 1623*, Volumes 28 and 28, Parts I and II (London: Harleian Society, 1889) |
| *HMC* | *Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports* |
| *HoP* | *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons*, 1604-1629, Volumes 1-6 (London: Cambridge University Press, 2010), eds, John P. Ferris and Andrew Thrush |
| | *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons*, 1660-1690, Volumes 1-3 (London: Boydell Brewer, 1983), ed. B D. Henning |
| *HoS* | *The History of Shrewsbury*, Volumes 1 and II (London: Harding Lepard & Co, 1825), by H Owen and R B Blakeway |
| LRO | Lichfield Record Office |
| NLW | National Library of Wales |
| ODNB | Oxford Dictionary of National Biography |
| OTC | Oswestry Town Council |
| Ottley Papers | 'The Ottley Papers relating to the Civil War', ed. William Phillips reproduced in the *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*: |
| | 2nd Series, Volume VI (1894), pp. 27-78 |
| | 2nd Series, Volume VII (1895), pp.241-360 |

| | |
|---|---|
| | 2nd Series, Volume VIII (1896), pp.199-312 |
| | 4th Series, Volume I (1911), pp.233- 318 |
| Rushworth | *Private Passages of State*, Volume IV (1659), Volume V (1721), ed., John Rushworth |
| SA | Shropshire Archives |
| STA | Staffordshire Archives |
| *SPR* | *Shropshire Parish Registers, Hereford, Lichfield and St Asaph Dioceses* (Shropshire Parish Register Society, various dates), ed., W.D.G. Fletcher |
| TNA | The National Archives |
| *TSP* | *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe*, Volumes 1-7, 1638-1660 (London, 1742), ed., Thomas Birch |
| *TSANHS* | *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, Series 1-4 (1878 onwards) |
| *VCH* | *Victoria County History of Shropshire*, Volumes III, XI, X and IV (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979, 1989, 1998 and 1989), ed., G.C. Baugh |
| | Volume II and VIII (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968 and 1973) ed., A.T. Gaydon |
| | Volume VI, Part 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), eds, W.A. Champion and A.T. Thacker |

# Explanatory Notes

Dates have been recorded using the old-style Julian Calendar, but the New Year is taken to begin on 1 January rather than the 25 March.

Contemporary spellings have been used wherever possible, with some modernisation on occasion purely to aid accessibility.

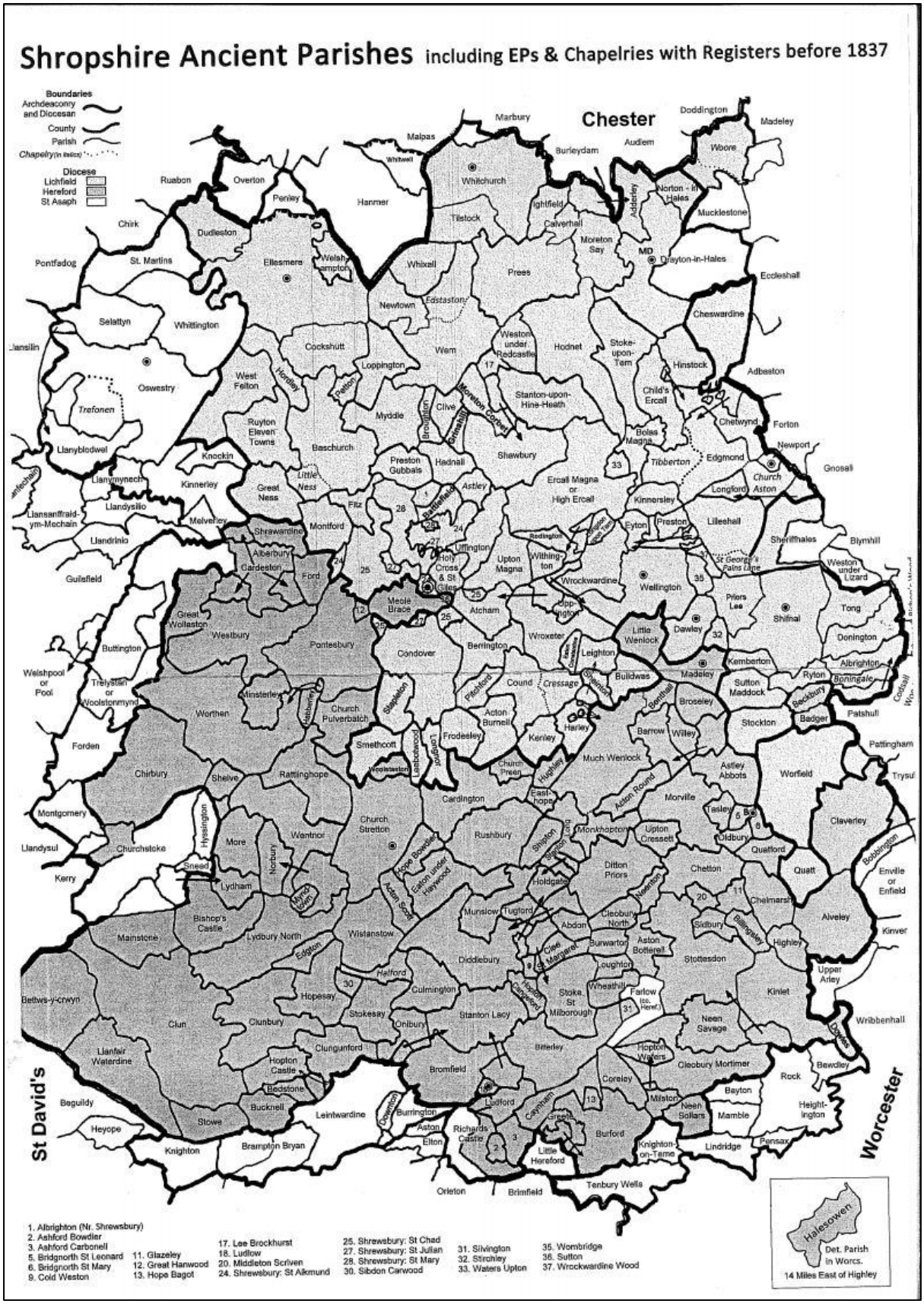
# Declaration

The material being presented for examination is my own work and has not been submitted for an award at this or any other HEI except in minor which are specifically noted in the body of the thesis. Where research pertaining to the thesis was undertaken collaboratively, the nature and extent of my individual contribution has been made explicit.

# Contents

Map of the parishes of Shropshire pre 1837.

Compiled by the Shropshire Family History and Shropshire Archives, 2013.


Shropshire Ancient Parishes including EPs & Chapelries with Registers before 1837
Boundaries
Archdeaconry and Diocesan
County
Parish
Chapelry(in italics)
Diocese
Lichfield
Hereford
St Asaph
Chester
St David's
Worcester
Marbury
Malpas
Whitchurch
Burleydam
Audlem
Doddington
Madeley
Wore
Norton - in Hales
Mucklestone
Ruabon
Overton
Penley
Hanmer
Tilstock
Ightfield
Calverhall
Moreton Say
Drayton-in-Hales
Chirk
Dudleston
Ellesmere
Welshampton
Whixall
Prees
Eccleshall
Pontfadog
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Newtown
Edstaston
Cheswardine
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Whittington
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Weston under Redcastle
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Moreton Corbet
Stanton-upon-Hine-Heath
Child's Ercall
Chetwynd
Forton
Trefonen
Ruyton Eleven Towns
Baschurch
Shawbury
Bolas Magna
Newport
Llanyblodwel
Knockin
Preston Gubbals
Hadnall
Tibberton
Edgmond
Gnosall
Llanymynech
Kinnerley
Great Ness
Little Ness
Astley
Ercall Magna or High Ercall
Longford
Church Aston
Llansanffraid-ym-Mechain
Llandysilio
Melverley
Fitz
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Eyton
Preston
Lilleshall
Sheriffhales
Blymhill
Llandrinio
Shrawardine
Montford
Alberbury
Cardeston
Ford
Holy Cross & St Giles
Upton Magna
Withington
Wrockwardine
Wellington
Priors Lee
Shifnal
Weston under Lizard
Tong
Guilsfield
Meole Brace
Atcham
Berrington
Wroxeter
Little Wenlock
Dawley
Donington
Great Wollaston
Westbury
Pontesbury
Condover
Leighton
Kemberton
Albrighton
Buttington
Welshpool or Pool
Trelystan or Woolstonmynd
Minsterley
Habberley
Church Pulverbatch
Stapleton
Pitchford
Cound
Cressage
Buildwas
Madeley
Sutton Maddock
Ryton
Boningale
Coalbrookdale
Worthen
Acton Burnell
Broseley
Beckbury
Patshull
Forden
Smethcott
Frodesley
Kenley
Harley
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Stockton
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Astley Abbotts
Worfield
Trysull
Montgomery
Cardington
Easthope
Morville
Tasley
Claverley
Llandysul
Churchstoke
Church Stretton
Wentnor
Rushbury
Monkhopton
Upton Cressett
Oldbury
Quatford
Bobbington
Kerry
Hyssington
More
Norbury
Lydham
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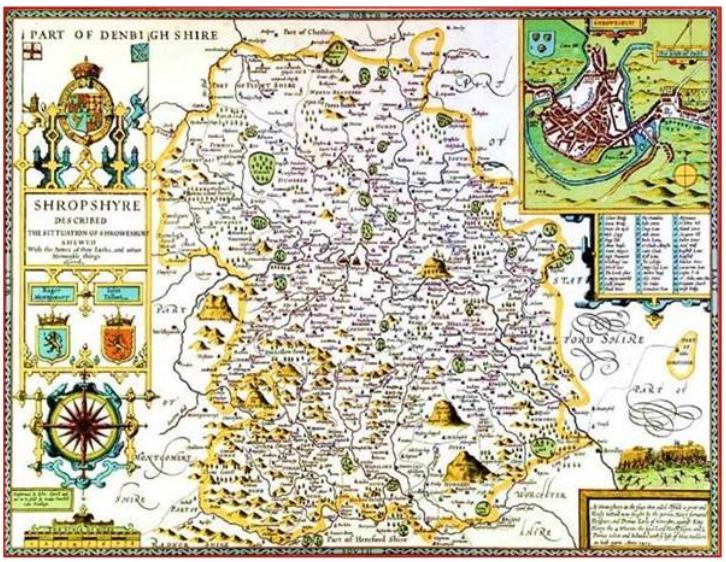
Knighton
Brampton Bryan
Richards Castle
Burford
Neen Sollars
Mamble
Knighton-on-Teme
Lindridge
Pensax
Orleton
Brimfield
Tenbury Wells
Halesowen
Det. Parish in Worcs.
14 Miles East of Highley
1. Albrighton (Nr. Shrewsbury)
2. Ashford Bowdler
3. Ashford Carbonell
5. Bridgnorth St Leonard
6. Bridgnorth St Mary
9. Cold Weston
11. Glazeley
12. Great Hanwood
13. Hope Bagot
17. Lee Brockhurst
18. Ludlow
20. Middleton Scriven
24. Shrewsbury: St Alkmund
25. Shrewsbury: St Chad
27. Shrewsbury: St Julian
28. Shrewsbury: St Mary
30. Sibdon Carwood
31. Silvington
32. Stirchley
33. Waters Upton
35. Wombridge
36. Sutton
37. Wrockwardine Wood




Speed's map of Shropshire 1627, taken from *The Theatre of Britain*

# Introduction

> This then being the Marches of England and Wales, was sore afflicted by bloudy broiles, which caused many of their Townes to be strongly walled, and thirty two Castles to be strongly built… the Shire-Towne Shrewsburie... is inferior to few of our Cities; her buildings faire, her streets many and large, her Citizens rich, her trade for the most part in the staple commodities of cloth and freeses.[1]

Seventeenth-century Shropshire was a relatively prosperous county, whose wealth had been initially fostered through royal patronage, and subsequently augmented through the wool trade with Wales. It had its fair share of wealthy landed gentry, yet few were ennobled, probably because many had recent links to either trade or the professions. They had used the profits of their labours to further their social standing from the late 1530s onwards, yet none had any real interest in their genealogy, except in order to prove their status for the Herald's Visitations, which took place in 1569, 1584 and 1623.[2] Nor were there any early antiquarians such as Lambarde in Kent, Dugdale in Warwickshire or Thoroton in Nottinghamshire, who had sufficient interest in their home counties to create a detailed history.[3] It was not until the eighteenth and early nineteenth century that any such interest was shown within the county,

[1] John Speed, *The Theatre of Britain* (1627).
[2] *HV*, Parts 1 and 2.
[3] William Lambarde, *A Perambulation of Kent* (1576). William Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656). Robert Thoroton, *Antiquities of Nottinghamshire* (1677). See C.G. Baugh, 'Shropshire' in C. Currie and C.P. Lewis, eds, *A Guide to English County Histories* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1994).

and even then historians tended to study specific areas, such as Shrewsbury, or the even smaller entity of Myddle, rather than the county as a whole.[4] Towards the end of the Victorian period, the interest in county studies generally petered out, replaced by a more academic interest in the great theatre of war and the resulting political revolution, as examined by Gardiner and Firth.[5] Yet in Shropshire, many local historians continued to write extensively on various aspects of county life, particularly during the civil war period, which resulted in a myriad of articles published in the *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society* which have been the building blocks for many subsequent studies.

The academic interest in county studies lay mainly dormant, until it was revived in the late 1950s and early 1960s by Alan Everitt with his study on his home county of Kent.[6] Everitt's work encouraged subsequent academic examinations of Cheshire, Sussex, Somerset and Warwickshire amongst others. In fact, nearly every English county has been researched, but Shropshire has not been one of them. This is surprising given that the other Marcher counties – Cheshire, Herefordshire, and Gloucestershire – have all been examined in detail, as have Monmouthshire and Radnorshire on the Welsh side of the border.[7] That situation has now been rectified, in part, by two recent standalone studies – the very brief

[4] Richard Gough, *Human Nature Displayed in the History of Myddle* (London, 1834), later reprinted as *Antiquityes and Memoryes of the Parish of Myddle* (Shrewsbury, Adnitt and Naunton, 1875). *HoS*, Volumes I and II.

[5] S.R. Gardiner, *The History of the Great Civil War 1642-1649*, Volumes 1-4 (London: Longmans, 1886-1901), and *The History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, Volumes 1-4 (London: Longmans, 1897-1903). C.H. Firth, *The Last Years of the Protectorate*, Volumes 1 and 2 (London: Longmans, 1907). A trickle of county studies continued to appear in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, including J. and J.T. Webb, *Memorials of the civil war between King Charles 1, and the Parliament of England, as it affected Herefordshire and adjacent counties* (London: Longmans, 1879), A. Kingston, *Hertfordshire during the Great Civil W*ar (Hertford: Stephen Austin, 1884), J.W. Willis Bund, *The Civil War in Worcestershire, 1642-46 and the Scotch Invasion of 1651* (Birmingham: Midland Educational, 1905) and E. Broxap, *The Great Civil War in Lancashire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1910).

[6] Alan M. Everitt, *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion 1640-1660* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1966).

[7] John Morrill, *Cheshire, 1630-1660: County Government and Society During the English Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974). David Ross, *Royalist, But…. Herefordshire in the English Civil War 1640-1651* (Almeley: Logaston Press, 2012). Andrew Warmington, *Civil War, Interregnum and Restoration in Gloucestershire, 1640-1672* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1997). Jeremy Knight, *Civil War and Restoration in Monmouthshire* (Almeley: Logaston, 2005). Keith Parker, *Radnorshire from Civil War to Restoration. A Study of the County and its Environs 1640-1660 in a Regional Setting* (Almeley: Logaston Press, 2005).

introductory work undertaken by Bracher and Emmett, and the far more detailed examination by Worton.[8] Both, however, concentrate on the military aspects of the war, its people and finance. Neither work goes beyond the second civil war, nor do they deal in any detail about the impact that the war had on the county. Other aspects of county life during the mid-seventeenth century have also been considered; Wanklyn undertook detailed work on the question of allegiance within the context of county life, Coulton has discussed the question of religion, and Hutton included many references to the county in his work on the Marches during the civil war.[9] The most current work on Shrewsbury is the latest volume of the *Victoria County History* series, which deals with the town and its environs over the centuries.[10] A couple of chapters deal with the town during the 1640s and 1650s, and cover local politics, the reforms to religious worship, and the economic developments of the period. These have used a variety of source materials, including the original works by one of the editors, W.A. Champion, whose studies on the population and economy of the town have been also been used in this thesis. Even so there has been no complete standalone work carried out on the administration of Shropshire throughout the 1640s and 1650s, and the purpose of this thesis is to correct that omission.

The conflict in Shropshire may not have had the glory or notoriety of the major theatres and battles of the civil war, but that is not to say that the county was of no importance during the conflict. Certainly, the war had drastic consequences for the local populace, both on a financial and human basis. The county was seen by the crown as a county of great strategic importance, being the gateway to Wales with direct routes north to Chester, and from there to Ireland, and Hereford to the south. This, coupled

[8] Terry Bracher and Roger Emmet *Shropshire in the Civil War* (Shropshire: Shropshire Books, 2000). Jonathan Worton, 'The Royalist and Parliamentarian War Effort in Shropshire During the First and Second English Civil Wars, 1642–1648' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Chester, 2015), and now published in book form '*To Settle the Crown' - Waging Civil War in Shropshire 1642-1648* (Solihull: Hellion and Co., 2016).

[9] Malcolm Wanklyn 'Landed society and allegiance in Cheshire and Shropshire in the First Civil War', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 1976). Barbara Coulton, *Regime and Religion: Shrewsbury 1400-1700* (Almeley: Logaston Press, 2000). Ronald Hutton, *The Royalist War Effort, 1642-1646* (London: Routledge, 1982).

[10] *VCH*, Volume VI, Part 1.

with the advantage of the established river trade up and down the Severn to Bristol, made it the ideal staging post for the royalists.

This thesis will be the first standalone work of its kind on county life and the administration of Shropshire during this period. It is not an examination of the military course of the war, although local events will be briefly referred to as part of the general discussion, but it will deal with the governance of the county in the months before the raising of the royal standard at Nottingham on 22 August 1642, through the war years, the Commonwealth and Protectorate, and on to the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. It will concentrate on the county's administration and its personnel during that period, including the relationship between local and central government, whilst examining the families who had influence and power during that time. Yet it is not a study of allegiance *per se*, nor is it an investigation into the county community theory, as initially proposed and defined by Everitt, but subsequently questioned and refuted by many other academics – though the theory and the reactions to it are important in setting the context for this new county study. What it will do, however, is use the framework employed by academics on other county studies, and during this analysis there will be some reference to Everitt's work, and the studies that followed on from his examination.

## The County Community Theory

Everitt's research on Kent was not just a purely military or administrative history, but dealt with all aspects of county life during that period. He studied the local families, their landholdings and social standing in the community, income and trades, religion and justice. Much emphasis was placed upon the relationship between central and local government, and how the Kentish gentry reacted to perceived interference from Westminster. Studies of this kind had fallen out of fashion, with most academics looking at the bigger picture of the civil war period through its battles and high politics, rather than concentrating on grassroots history. However, Everitt believed that it was at county level that the

important decisions of the war were made, as it was the localities that raised and recruited the soldiers, administrators, arms and financial support for both sides, and the basics of war were conducted.[11]

Everitt's work on Kent was based on the theory that 'the social and political life of the vast majority of Englishmen, even among the gentry, was lived almost wholly within the confines of their county, or, as they described it, their "country".'[12] His later research expanded the argument to include Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, but throughout his work, Everitt, in many ways, denigrated large sections of Stuart society, some of whom had as much wealth and influence as their social superiors.[13] Firstly his study completely ignored men in trade or the law, and even the minor gentry of the county were dismissed. He argued that so far as the latter category were concerned, those who held only one estate, however large, had no outlook beyond their own particular parish, let alone the county, and would never dream of a political career or even becoming a justice of the peace.[14] He believed that most counties in England were either dominated by a few great dynasties, or by a network of closely-knit families of the same social standing, based on the fact that he saw the Kentish gentry as being conservative and increasingly inward-looking through intermarriage, with the majority of them holding no estates outside the county.[15] Furthermore, despite its proximity to the capital, the Kentish gentry did not venture far outside their immediate environs, and so developed an 'ethos of [their] own.'[16] Everitt considered that his county community, which of course did not include the mercantile classes or the legal establishment, tolerated both the Stuart and the parliamentarian regimes during the 1640s, but really wished to remain neutral during the war, and longed for self-governance.[17]

Everitt's argument could never be fully formed, centred as it was upon one small section of the county populace. Even the Church which, certainly in many counties, played a great part in the divisions which

[11] Everitt, *Kent,* pp.156-157,187-200. *A & O,* Volume I, pp.175-176.
[12] Everitt, *Kent,* p.13.
[13] Alan M. Everitt, *Change in the Provinces* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1972).
[14] Everitt, *Kent,* p.34.
[15] *Ibid.,* pp.35,42.
[16] *Ibid.,* p.45.
[17] *Ibid.,* pp.15,17.

led to war, is barely mentioned.[18] Everitt firmly believed that it was the family ties and local influence, not political connections, that were all-important so far as the leadership of the county was concerned, and it was obvious that the Kentish gentry were unwilling to let those of a lower social standing become involved in local administration unless it was really necessary.[19] During the war the local committee was dominated by twenty or so gentry families, but it was only when their workload increased that their membership necessarily had to expand to include some of the county merchants.[20] As we shall see, other counties, Shropshire included, were far more inclusive, and accepted both wealthy merchants and lawyers on both the Commission of the Peace, and later during the war the royalist Commissions of Array and parliamentarian Committees of Safety. Whether that was because trade dominated a county, or an influx of the landowners after the late 1530s changed that county's social structure, is a matter for further research.

In Kent, the parliamentarian committee ensured that the wellbeing of the county was a priority, with most assessment money raised being put towards local defences and arming and supporting local troops, even those fighting outside the area. This was not uncommon during the war, but Everitt believed that the encroachment of central government into local affairs was more apparent in Kent than in other counties.[21] He saw the appointment of Thomas Kelsey as major general of the area in 1655 as being the end of local autonomy.[22] Yet, he also argued that the conservative but independent spirit of the Kent community contributed to the ultimate demise of the Cromwellian regime.[23] This last premise seemingly ignored all the other factors that were involved in the end of the Protectorate and the restoration of the monarchy, namely the weakness of Richard Cromwell and the increasingly bitter fall-out between the army and Parliament.

[18] *Ibid.,* pp.37-38.
[19] *Ibid.,* p.69.
[20] *Ibid.,* p.177.
[21] *Ibid.,* p.287.
[22] *Ibid.,* p.292.
[23] *Ibid.,* p.17.

Everitt's book was well researched, and his work certainly made it acceptable to research the period on a local rather than national level, but he did take a somewhat blinkered view of Kent, and to a lesser extent Northamptonshire and Leicestershire, by effectively ignoring a large proportion of the population. It is hard to believe that in Kent, a county with busy trading ports and close to the capital, the gentry were either not aware of, or not bothered with, issues beyond their immediate environs. For, as Eales has pointed out, if the definition of community is widened to include those whom Everitt ignored, then many different opinions, both political and religious, are revealed. She pointed out that by concentrating on the gentry with royalist sympathies, Everitt had effectively ignored local parliamentarian leaders, and the level of support that they commanded. Furthermore, by concentrating on one class, who were of a moderate religious persuasion, he had failed to gauge the effect that Puritanism had on county life. There were trade links between London and Southwark, even if not used by the gentry, which became a conduit for news and gossip to be disseminated.[24]

Everitt's work on social changes in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire was much briefer, and did concede that the political and social composition of each county was different; Leicestershire, for example, was controlled by two old powerful families, whereas Northamptonshire had an influx of 'nouveau riche' and often Puritan-minded businessmen or lawyers.[25] He still maintained, however, that apart from those few who had a London house, national politics had no relevance to daily life, due to poor infrastructure and lack of local newsbooks.[26] Insularity was further encouraged through intermarriage, and the patriarchal nature of county society.[27] Even with the arrival of the professional classes, who often did not have old established local ties, the network of localism within county society was hard to beat.[28] Everitt's theories do have their problems, not least the points argued by Eales. The use of the word 'country' to denote county, which Everitt argued underlined insularity, was one; yet the

[24] Jacqueline Eales, 'Alan Everitt and The Community of Kent Revisited', in Jaqueline Eales and Andrew Hopper, eds, *The County Community in Seventeenth Century England and Wales* (Hertford: University of Hertford Press, 2012), pp.21-24.
[25] Everitt, *Change in the Provinces*, p.6.
[26] *Ibid.*, p.9
[27] *Ibid.*, pp.22-24.
[28] *Ibid*., pp.43-46.

use of the phrase was common during the seventeenth century, and had numerous connotations - Gough used it liberally in his work on Myddle simply to mean the immediate area or parish.[29] Furthermore, not all communities were uninterested in national events, newsbooks did make their way out into the provinces usually by carrier, and news was also spread by merchants or lawyers returning from the capital.[30]

Everitt's theory certainly had the tacit, although perhaps not wholehearted, approval of Morrill and Fletcher, who conducted their research on Cheshire and Sussex respectively.[31] Fletcher's work had, perhaps, the closest correlation to Everitt's, yet even in a neighbouring county there were differences. Fletcher included the corporate and professional aspects of Sussex in his research, and encompassed some of the merchants and lawyers who had played a part in the county's administration. Fletcher concentrated on whether localism was a reality in seventeenth-century Sussex, a county often isolated in bad weather due to poor transport links, and with a high degree of self-sufficiency due to the largely agricultural economy.[32] Despite this it developed a strong cattle trade with London, and its declining iron industry still proved to be highly lucrative during the war years.[33] Sussex was not a community in splendid isolation, nor was it an acutely insular society. The gentry families usually did intermarry, but socialised outside their immediate family circles, and their children were often educated away from home.[34] It was not a county dominated by a few nobles, but by around ninety gentry families, of whom only around ten were regarded as newcomers, with the rest either having Tudor origins, or roots back to the fourteenth century. Fletcher believed that it was difficult to define gentry status during the period, as Stuart society was in a constant state of flux; certainly, he did not accept Everitt's conclusion that to qualify as a member of the gentry someone had to be knighted, as often those who achieved wealth

[29] Richard Gough, *Antiquities and Memoirs of the Parish of Myddle* (Shrewsbury: Adnitt and Naunton, 1875).
[30] Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks 1641-1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.239-241.
[31] Anthony Fletcher, *A County Community in Peace and War: Sussex 1600-1660* (London: Longman, 1975), pp.44-53.
[32] *Ibid.*, pp.5-11.
[33] *Ibid.*, pp.16,18-20.
[34] *Ibid.*, pp.35-38,44-53.

styled themselves as being of gentle upbringing, or as will be seen in Shropshire paid the financially embarrassed crown to be ennobled.[35]

Fletcher's gentry were more aware of the county's needs, than central government, yet from 1640 onwards they played a reduced role in its administration.[36] Sussex only had one Commission of the Peace, divided into the east and west rapes, with one full county session per year, but it was hard to get justices to travel far so there was no real intermingling of JPs from different sides of the county, echoing the more fragmented bench in Cheshire.[37] Unlike Cheshire, however, the business of the Sussex commission expanded dramatically and became a vital part of local government, dealing with county-wide issues such as taxation, apprenticeships and bastardy.[38] Consequently, the role of local JPs increased, but not all justices were necessarily from gentry families, for when the commission's workload increased dramatically it began to include merchants, and became a 'multitude of kinship connections, spiritual affinities and business and administrative relationships.'[39] Sussex certainly seemed to be more open than Kent, appointing the most suitable candidates onto the wartime county committees, rather than relying on social standing alone.[40]

Everitt had also posited in his work that it was the gentry, through their involvement in the Quarter Sessions, who oversaw the wellbeing of the needy poor in the county. Yet Fletcher described the 'charity of the gentry [as being] too erratic… too dependent on the whims and initiative of individuals.'[41] He, and later Morrill, argued that Beier's study on the provision of alms in Warwickshire painted a far more accurate picture, when it asserted that between 1649 and 1660 the justices dealt with nearly four times as many cases of poor relief than in the previous eleven years when the gentry had

[35] *Ibid.,* pp.22-25.
[36] *Ibid.,* p.21.
[37] *Ibid*., pp.134-135.
[38] *Ibid.,* pp.138-139.
[39] *Ibid.,* p.132.
[40] *Ibid*., p.219.
[41] *Ibid.,* p.156.

been in control.[42] Localism in Sussex was perhaps more apparent at the end of the war, as poor harvests led to a petition to Parliament in 1648 to reduce taxes and disband the army and local garrisons, in an attempt to rebalance the local economy.[43] Upon the dissolution of Parliament in 1653, and the subsequent Nominated Assembly, any elected voice that the county had in Parliament was lost, but the local commissions effectively remained unchanged, so when the first Protectorate Parliament was called, it was the local conservative gentry who were elected, not the radicals.[44] So, although Sussex was perhaps more inclusive than its neighbour, to a large extent the gentry still prevailed in the county's administration, both at a local and central level.

Morrill's research on Cheshire during the same period provided a totally different county model in most respects. His Cheshire society had an independency, which initially stemmed from the power afforded to it by the Palatinate of Chester, with its Court of Exchequer and Great Sessions. Yet, it had no natural overlord living in the county, albeit that out of one hundred and six important Cheshire families, seventy-one could trace their lineage to the fourteenth century.[45] On that basis, Morrill suggested that Cheshire had one of the most stable ruling elites, which had been reinforced through intermarriage, making the county practically self-sufficient.[46] However, in the early 1640s, only twenty-five of the dominant families were on the Commission of the Peace. Unlike Kent, the sessions sat in five different locations, and generally the justices sat only in the court local to them, with little interaction as was the case in Sussex.[47] Everitt's definition of the gentry included armigerous status; this was questioned by Morrill, who argued that the Herald's Visitations were often unreliable, and that a person's lifestyle, not necessarily wealth, was the key factor. This somewhat echoed Gough's own contemporary views, who when discussing Thomas Baker of Sweeney (sheriff of Shropshire in 1649, and an MP in the Nominated Assembly) described him as being 'noe comely person of body, nor of great parts, butt hee

[42] A.L. Beier, 'Poor Relief in Warwickshire 1630-1660', *Past and Present*, No. 35 (Dec. 1966), pp.77-100.
[43] Fletcher, *Sussex*, p.291.
[44] *Ibid.*, p.301.
[45] Morrill, *Cheshire*, p.21.
[46] *Ibid.*, pp.2-5.
[47] *Ibid*., pp.3,9.

was very rich in lands, woods, money and goods,' and, who after marrying a gentlewoman and becoming a JP, 'wrote himself esquire.'[48] Morrill divided the gentry into two: the county set, who socialised within a large network of others of the same standing, and the parochial, who really only socialised with their neighbours of similar economic status.[49]

Cheshire also experienced a growth in Puritanism, especially amongst the Cheshire merchants, which had been allowed to flourish by the acceptance of their faith by the Bishop of Chester, as an attempt to prevent the resurgence of Catholicism, but also encouraged by the Collegiate Church in Manchester. The opposition to episcopacy was supported by one of the leading county figures, Sir William Brereton, who was both a justice of the peace and member of Parliament for the county, but they were disparaged by Sir Thomas Aston who despised the rise of Puritanism, mainly because he saw it as leading to public unrest, and who petitioned Parliament concerning the same in March 1641.[50] Cheshire had never expressed any desire to divorce itself from the shackles of central government, and any disputes that they had previously had over financial impositions had been during the Personal Rule. Unlike Kent, those who would have been expected to lead the county through the war did not really feature on the local committees. Leadership fell to Sir William Brereton, not a natural choice due to his modest estates and birth, who had used the influence gained since becoming an MP to dominate the committee. He was aided by several members of minor gentry families, and it was only after the fall of Chester that Cheshire gentry again played a more active role in local affairs, able to do so because by then Brereton had focussed his attentions away from the county.[51] Brereton, a lawyer, landowner and businessman with interests in New England, did not fit into Everitt's definition of a member of the ruling gentry, having paid Buckingham for his title in 1627.[52] In wartime Cheshire more radical views had prevailed

[48] Gough, *History of Myddle*, pp.97-98. See also Malcolm Wanklyn, 'Landownership, Political authority and Social Status in Shropshire and Cheshire 1500-1700', *West Midlands Studies*, 1 (1978), pp.23-28.
[49] Morrill, *Cheshire*, p.15.
[50] *CSPD*, Charles I, 1640-1641, p.528. Morrill, *Cheshire*, pp.44-51. Sir Thomas Aston, *A petition delivered in to the lords Spirituall and Temporall by Sir Thomas Aston, Baronet, from the county palatinate of Chester concerning episcopacy; to the high and honourable Court of Parliament* (1641).
[51] Morrill, *Cheshire*, pp.79-90.
[52] *Ibid.*, p.25.

and it was only after 1645 that a more conservative approach was taken.[53] Even then, the old families held less sway at the Quarter Sessions than they used to do, and the sessions themselves became less important.[54] Slowly county administrative powers were transferred to central government, so again the gentry's influence was reduced. Morrill did not agree with Everitt that the Cromwellian regime was brought low by the gentry's demands for a return to the pre-war years. He pointed out that Booth's abortive rebellion in August 1659 was not necessarily to restore the monarchy, but to try and restore a sense of normality.[55] Furthermore, so far as the distribution of poor relief was concerned Morrill (citing Beier) also demonstrated that the distribution of alms increased considerably in the 1640s and 1650s, having declined dramatically in the 1630s when the gentry held sway over the Quarter Sessions.[56]

Around the same time as these two studies, David Underdown provided his views on the county of Somerset.[57] He looked at a narrower period, between 1640 and 1660, and his was not a full community thesis as such. A commonality between Somerset and Kent was a dislike of interference from central government. Somerset had busy markets and trading ports and the burgeoning tourist attraction of Bath, yet it had no resident nobility. Although some of the gentry families had been in the locality for centuries, many were of Tudor origin, having made their fortune either in the law or civil service. The gentry intermarried and socialised within the county borders, and, in the main, their interests were confined to those parameters.[58] Underdown referred to theirs as a deferential society, but also pointed out that where there was no gentry family in a parish, as was the case in Martock, then those of means, but of a lower social standing, took over the role of *pater familias*. Even so, their neighbours described them as being not 'best bred,' and called them 'clowns,' but they did not seem to be bothered by these insults as 'knowing they have money in their purses to make them gentlemen when they are fit for the

[53] *Ibid.,* pp.182-184.
[54] *Ibid.,* pp.224,234.
[55] *Ibid.,* pp.253,310-320.
[56] *Ibid.,* p.84. Beier, 'Poor Relief', p.90.
[57] David Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War and Interregnum* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973).
[58] *Ibid.,* pp.19-20.

degree.'[59] This contemporary comment suggested that Stuart society was, in general, more accepting of those with different social backgrounds than Everitt believed. Puritanism also flourished in Somerset; for many it was purely a reaction to the enforcement of Arminianism upon them, but the real followers were in general to be found amongst those involved in the cloth industry.[60] However, the county began to divide over the issue, with some of the gentry trusting the King to sort out such divisive matters, and others fearing the malignant effect Charles's advisors were having on him.[61] Underdown's study illustrated that no county was completely happy with having to comply with orders and pay taxes imposed by Westminster, particularly when its people felt that their own leaders knew what was required in their own locality, and could more than adequately administer the same. The issue of localism would always arise, but not every county wanted to isolate itself completely from the rest of the country and act as an autonomous state.

The first direct criticism of Everitt's interpretation of Stuart Kent came from Hirst, who argued that Kent in 1640 was politically divided so that men seeking election had to appeal to a wide range of opinions including those of the electorate interested in national affairs.[62] Clive Holmes was more specific in his criticism of the county theory. He argued that the emphasis placed on localism skewed people's perceptions of Stuart society and politics.[63] Holmes maintained that antiquity of lineage did not necessarily mean a blinkered and conservative outlook, as some ancient families had invested in ventures abroad.[64] Nor did he accept that intermarriage deepened insularity, preferring Fletcher's analysis that often friendship and blood ties ran in similar, but wider, circles..[65] Holmes felt that Everitt had ignored the fact that gentry were educated away from home, and had contact with the capital, either

[59] *Ibid.,* p.16, and E.H. Bates, ed., *The Description of the County of Somerset, Drawn up by Thomas Gerard of Trent, 1633,* Somerset Record Society, 15 (1900), p.124.
[60] Underdown, *Somerset*, pp.21-22.
[61] *Ibid.,* p.28.
[62] Derek Hirst, 'The Defection of Sir Edward Dering', *Historical Journal,* 15, 2, (1972), pp.193-208.
[63] Clive Holmes, 'The County Community in Stuart Historiography', *Journal of British Studies,* 19, No. 2 (spring, 1980), pp.54-73.
[64] *Ibid.,* pp.55-56, as seen in the ancient East Anglian Barrington and Barbarisation families, who were both involved in the Providence Island Company.
[65] Fletcher, *Sussex,* pp.44-53.

through ongoing legal proceedings, or due to a profession.[66] In a follow-up study on Lincolnshire, Holmes considered both villages and towns, the clergy and lawyers alongside the county gentry.[67] The face of the Lincolnshire gentry was frequently changing during that time. Estates were sold either through debt or failure of the family line, and purchased by either wealthy outsiders or local men who had made advantageous marriage alliances. Many of the gentry including the Earls of Rutland, Sir Thomas Grantham and Sir Anthony Ireby, had trade links outside the county, whilst others made their fortunes at court.[68]

Not only was Holmes's Lincolnshire community more open to trade than in Kent, but around forty percent of the gentry married partners from outside the county, and many of their sons attended either University or the Inns of Court, thereby widening their experience of the world. Yet even Holmes conceded that they still tended to socialise within a close-knit circle within the county boundaries.[69] There were eight Quarter Sessions districts in the county, and again there was little interaction between JPs except when the Assizes were held twice a year.[70] Holmes did not see Lincolnshire as being apart from the rest of the country; the gentry in his study married, traded and were educated outside the county borders, so although local issues were important to them their 'national consciousness was strong.'[71]

Another major county study of the 1980s was Hughes's work on Warwickshire, which stressed her unease at the county community theory from the outset as 'county boundaries are no guides to social and economic characteristics.'[72] Hughes argued that burgeoning, industrial Birmingham had more in common with south Staffordshire and north Worcestershire than it did with the rural south of the county around Stratford. Nor were county boundaries any bar to trade, as the inhabitants of Bedworth, regularly

[66] Holmes, 'The County Community', pp.57-61.
[67] Clive Holmes, *Lincolnshire in the Seventeenth Century* (Lincoln: Lincolnshire Community Council, 1980).
[68] *Ibid.*, pp.66-70.
[69] *Ibid.*, pp.75-78.
[70] *Ibid.*, pp.83-84.
[71] *Ibid.*, pp.262-263.
[72] Ann Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire, 1620-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p.1.

traded with Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. The corporation of Coventry was isolated within the county, it was fiercely independent and had little to do with the Warwickshire gentry apart from money lending.[73] Warwickshire was not a unified county in terms of either agriculture or industry, and was therefore less socially self-contained than Kent. Furthermore, it had no dominant noble family at the forefront of local affairs. This was mainly because many of them had left the county to seek favour with the court, and so took little interest in local administration.[74] Like Morrill, Hughes did not believe that wealth was an indicator to, rather than of, gentility, and included not only armigerous families in her study, but also those described as gentlemen by their associates and neighbours. As was the case in many counties (Shropshire included), the ability to purchase former monastic lands in the sixteenth century created families with pretensions of gentility, as well as allowing the older county families to establish their dominance.[75] The combination of new blood, the fact that Warwickshire men did not see the county borders as barriers to trade or clientele, and that over half of marriage unions were with partners from outside the county, meant that Everitt's model simply did not fit in with this Midlands society.[76]

The importance of the Quarter Sessions, as a meeting place for the local gentry, was not apparent in Warwickshire, as there was only one central sitting, and JPs from the south of the county rarely attended. Some in fact sat on other Commissions of the Peace, and there were few marriage or family ties amongst the justices.[77] Hughes's Warwickshire was not isolated, its MPs brought local views to Westminster, and returned with news from the capital. Furthermore, newsbooks and printed copies of speeches were brought home by both lawyers and litigants.[78] Yet, both during and after the war, an element of localism did appear amongst the committees who were afraid that if the large amounts of money and troops were sent out of the county to help the wider war effort, then the county would suffer.[79]

[73] *Ibid.,* pp.1-16.
[74] *Ibid.,* pp.20-22.
[75] *Ibid.,* p.28.
[76] *Ibid.,* pp.37-44.
[77] *Ibid.,* pp.54-55.
[78] *Ibid.,* pp.89-90.
[79] *Ibid.,* pp.220,227.

The above studies set the context for extensive work since carried out by academics on most of the counties in England. Some have looked at county society, others such as Gratton's excellent study on the civil wars in Lancashire, have concentrated on military matters, whilst dealing briefly with the county gentry's involvement in the conflict.[80] Coleby and Roberts have concentrated more on local government. Roberts's study on Devon found it to be a county with an increasingly Puritan outlook in response to Laudian reforms. Yet it was a cautious county, never objecting to policies enforced upon it, nor advocating for change. There was no one family that could co-ordinate and control local affairs, and in fact after the second civil war and the execution of the King, the local justices were reticent to serve on the Commission of the Peace.[81] Outsiders such as Sir Hardress Waller and Major General John Disbrowe were therefore relied on to administer local affairs.[82] Coleby's work on Hampshire, which starts at the beginning of the Interregnum, dealt with the relationship between central and county government.[83] After the war, appointment to local office was solely made by central government, with an expectation that the candidate be loyal to Parliament. In Hampshire, several former, although inactive, royalists, were made sheriff throughout the period, and some sat as JPs. This appears have been an attempt at integration and reconciliation, rather than a lack of suitable alternative candidates. The county also appointed several local burgesses on to various committees rather than rely on help from outside personnel, and Parliament was quite happy to leave important matters, such as revenue, in the hands of the local elites. [84]

[80] J.M. Gratton, *The Parliamentarian and Royalist War Effort in Lancashire, 1642-1651* (Manchester: Chetham Society, 2010).
[81] Stephen K. Roberts, *Recovery and Restoration in an English County. Devon Local Administration, 1646-1670* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1985), p.25.
[82] *Ibid.,* p.xii.
[83] Andrew Coleby, *Central Government and The Localities:Hampshire 1649-1689* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp.89-90.
[84] *Ibid.,* pp.17-19,22,24,27.

# Local Community Studies

It is pertinent at this stage to explore the available studies on the other border counties, for whilst it is accepted that each county was different to a certain extent, the region had a centuries-old shared experience from the days of the Marcher lords. Warmington's work on Gloucestershire society revealed that economically there were many similarities between it and Shropshire: both were reliant on agriculture and the cloth trade for income. Gloucestershire was also a rural and remote county with the Severn being a major conduit for trade and with no dominant noble family, as the Berkeleys were absent landlords. Warmington also included all those who were considered gentlemen by others in his study.[85] There had been an influx of new money coming into the county in the previous century, with many prominent Londoners purchasing estates, and no one family held the balance of power within the shire. The leaders came from a group of the major families, half of whom were also linked through marriage.[86] Localism was also apparent in the 1620s and 1630s over the issues of the forced loan and ship money, as was the case in Shropshire.[87]

Ross's survey of Herefordshire does not really touch on the county community theory at all, concentrating more on the civil war, but Webb had compiled a more thorough study on the county the century before.[88] Herefordshire also had no dominant peers, but nor was there an influx of newcomers seen in other counties. Influential within county life were Viscount Scudamore of Sligo whose seat was at Holme Lacy, who had purchased his title in the 1630s, the Crofts of Croft Castle near the Shropshire border, the Coningsbys of Hampton Court near Leominster and the Puritan Harleys of Brampton

[85] Warmington, *Gloucestershire*, p.19.
[86] *Ibid.*, pp.20-21.
[87] *Ibid.*, p.22.
[88] Webb, *Herefordshire.*

Bryan.[89] Herefordshire had an agricultural economy, and traded in both rye and wheat, but was less affluent than its near neighbours.[90] Yet, infrastructure was poor, even though the river Wye ran through the county.[91] The local gentry also objected to the imposition of ship money, but theirs was a minor revolt by way of a Protestation, rather than the more direct action taken by some in Shropshire and Gloucestershire.[92] Aylmer found it to be a society in favour of parliamentary reforms, but was royalist at heart due to the conservative gentry's loyalty to the established Church of England, and the King as the traditional head of state. Puritans were very much in a minority in the county, probably due to the dearth of wealthy yeoman or influential merchants; furthermore, there had not been a revolt against Laudian reforms, as Coke, the bishop of Hereford, was an Episcopalian Anglican. The local members of Parliament, JPs and Grand Jurors were all from the gentry class, and usually from the ruling elite families, a vastly different situation from that of Shropshire.[93]

Knight in his study on Monmouthshire made a valid point that no shire was a fortress encircled by defences. The royalist gentry liaised with their counterparts in adjacent counties, and the parliamentarians had vital links with their brethren in Gloucester and Bristol.[94] Monmouthshire did have a resident aristocrat, namely Henry Herbert, fifth Earl of Worcester, who owned estates in the county, but took no part in its administration.[95] The family were of long-standing lineage, yet their links to Catholicism meant that he had little political influence. There were around twelve other prominent families who had served the county in Parliament, and between them they were the core of the county administration., but one family, the Prices of Monaughty, were predominant, so much so that in the first half of the seventeenth century the head of the family, Charles Price, was known as 'Baronet Price' or the 'Prince of Radnorshire'.[96] Despite Monmouthshire being similar to Herefordshire in terms of trade

[89] Ross, *Herefordshire*, pp.11-15.
[90] G.E. Aylmer, 'Who was ruling Herefordshire from 1645-1661', *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club*, XI (1972), pp.373-387.
[91] *Ibid.*, p.7.
[92] Ross, *Herefordshire*, p.28.
[93] Aylmer, 'Who was ruling', p.375.
[94] Knight, *Monmouthshire*, p.5.
[95] *Ibid.*, p.23.
[96] *Ibid.*, p.27, pp.50-54.

and society, it had good trading links with Bristol particularly so far as the dairy trade was concerned, so there was no suggestion of insularity.[97] This was unlike Radnorshire which was a very small, and allegedly very poor county, with little intermarriage over the border into England. The use of the Welsh language was extensive, and local cultures were adhered to, which in one aspect did make it more isolated than the other Welsh counties up and down the border.[98] Yet, it had a buoyant cattle trade, supplying meat to the West Midlands, Gloucester and Bristol, so was not totally isolated.

Shropshire during the mid-seventeenth century was a county with no resident aristocrats, but several prominent gentry families, many of whom had their roots and fortunes based either in trade or the law, some, such as the Weld family, more immediate than others. It was, to a certain extent socially inclusive, even before the war, and accepted local merchants and lawyers onto the Commission of the Peace; but as will be seen with objections made by some of the local gentry to the knighthood of Sir Thomas Harris of Boreatton in the 1620s, there was at times a limit to their acceptance. The Shropshire community, if one can be said to have existed, was therefore a very broad one, but was still subject to the societal expectations of good standing amongst their fellow county men, along with sufficient personal wealth and land. Previous county studies have concentrated on the questions of localism and insularity, whether that be related to trade, family life, or just sheer lack of interest in the outside world. This study will consider all aspects of Shropshire life, from the prominent and influential families and trades, through to religious differences and the administrative system of the county; from the six corporative towns at the highest level, through to the parish at the lowest. Where appropriate, comparison will be made between the findings in Shropshire and other counties. Those studies already undertaken have shown that no two counties were alike and many were totally dissimilar to Kent in almost every aspect. Even so, the interests of the local populace were generally at the forefront of the administrators' minds when the orders from central government were being applied, which sometimes resulted in a delay in executing them if they were not felt to be for everyone's benefit.

[97] *Ibid.*, p.35.
[98] Parker, *Radnorshire*, pp.11-16.

## County Organisation

By the seventeenth century, the titular heads of the county, namely the lord lieutenant and the sheriff, and their respective deputies, had become positions of prestige more than great power. Although their roles were far less important than they had been in medieval times, they still did, however, have some influence in the county, particularly the sheriff, whose duties still included issuing royal warrants and the writs for parliamentary elections and summonsing the members of the Grand Jury. Those who held the real power in the county administrative system were the members of the Commission of the Peace, who, in the main, came from local gentry families, and who, up until the beginning of the war, were always appointed by the King. These justices of the peace transmitted the orders that came from Westminster down to the local hundreds and parishes, with, in theory, any infractions being reported back to them, and acted upon. The issues that they oversaw did not just include law and order, as their title would denote, but also administration of relief to the poor and needy, settling questions of bastardy and vagrancy, and repairing the county's infrastructure. The next tier down of the administrative system was that of the town and corporation assemblies who had perhaps an even more immediate influence on the county populace on the issue of the maintenance of the poor, and the setting of lewns (taxes) that had to be paid by the inhabitants for vital town and parish services. All these orders, and the collection of taxes were carried out by the local constables and bailiffs, who, as will be seen, bore the brunt of people's dissatisfaction when it came to the payment of financial contributions.

Things changed once war broke out in 1642. The county committees and Commissions of Array were of vital importance to the organisation of both the war and its aftermath in the localities. Examination of the composition of those war-time and post-war bodies in Shropshire will be central to this study. Thus, we will explore whether royalists who had been involved in local administration before and during the wars continued to play an active part in county matters during the Interregnum, or whether they regained their position in society upon the restoration of Charles II. As already noted, different counties took different approaches to this issue, either through an attempt at conciliation between the two sides or as a matter of pure practicality due to the lack of suitable men able to serve.

In contrast, in Kent, Sussex and Somerset there appears to have been no continuity of those involved in the administration of the county during the various changes of regime. Once the war started, those loyal to Parliament in royalist counties were forced out of office, and vice versa in parliamentarian areas. During the Commonwealth and Protectorate these positions were generally reversed. The Kent committees began to be run by minor gentry, and those of lesser ranks began to play a larger role in administrative life.[99] In Sussex the power transferred to parliamentarians, but many committees included neutrals. Somerset's dissatisfaction with the later years of the Protectorate meant that old divisions began to heal, and, during Richard Cromwell's Protectorate, it was the conservatives who were elected. Yet, upon the ejection of Cromwell it was the radicals that took over power, a situation that continued up until the restoration when the old order returned.[100]

Cheshire took a more moderate stance, and it was the moderates under Sir George Booth who really held the power between 1646 and 1648, mainly because the more radical Brereton was more involved in Westminster matters by that time.[101] Several formerly royalist Chester aldermen were allowed to sit on committees, again probably because there was a real lack of suitable alternatives ready to serve.[102] Another pattern prevailed in Lincolnshire, where over half of the local administrators were dismissed from office in 1650, as they had either refused to sign the Engagement or to act upon parliamentary ordinances. They were replaced, in general, by minor gentry, military men and lawyers. In Boston and Grimsby, the corporation officials remained the same throughout the war. Yet, from 1647 the membership of the corporation of Lincoln, and Stamford and Grantham's Common Halls, were purged of those who had actively supported the King.[103] After 1654, some of those who had been forced from office returned to their posts, and in 1657 that invitation was widened further to include the Commission of the Peace.[104] At the restoration, there was no mass purge of former parliamentarians, and five were

[99] Everitt, *Kent*, p.329.
[100] Underdown, *Somerset*, pp.188-190.
[101] Morrill, *Cheshire*, pp.182-183.
[102] *Ibid.*, p.189.
[103] Holmes, *Lincolnshire*, pp.207-208.
[104] *Ibid.*, pp.215-216.

returned to the Convention Parliament. At a local level only about a fifth of the justices remained in post, the others being replaced by royalists and those former moderate parliamentarians who had withdrawn from local affairs after 1648.[105]

In Warwickshire the old elites did not feature widely in the Interregnum local government system.[106] The commissions were filled with the minor gentry, and those from a variety of backgrounds willing to become involved in local affairs.[107] Similarly, in Gloucestershire, where up until 1648 the local gentry dominated the commission, the Interregnum JPs were described as not 'being a very socially distinguished group.'[108] Gloucester itself was a case apart, for there seemed to be a continuity of rule within the corporation.[109] At the restoration, the county committees were purged, except in Gloucester itself where all the aldermen had already been properly elected.[110] Ross only took Herefordshire to 1651, but there is nothing to suggest that the county was any different from the others. Unfortunately in Monmouthshire the lack of Quarter Sessions books and other records means that it is difficult to assess any changes that took place; however, Knight does point out that there was no shortage of local men willing to serve on the committees and the Commission of the Peace, even though they generally came from minor gentry or had not been deemed of sufficiently high status to become a JP in the past.[111] Yet Henry Herbert regained some of the family lands during the Protectorate, and sat as MP for Brecon, although he was later involved in Booth's rebellion.[112] Some of Radnorshire's local committeemen were stripped of their positions, but they were not all replaced by outsiders or radicals, mainly because there were insufficient people of standing able to serve.[113] Later on in the Protectorate both the Commission of the Peace and the assessment committee included former royalists amongst their number, and four

[105] *Ibid.,* pp.218-219.
[106] Hughes, *Warwickshire,* p.289.
[107] *Ibid.,* p.297.
[108] Warmington, *Gloucestershire*, pp.102-103.
[109] *Ibid.,* p.103.
[110] *Ibid.,* p.182.
[111] Knight, *Monmouthshire*, pp.129-130.
[112] *Ibid.,* p.149.
[113] Parker, *Radnorshire*, pp.145-6.

out of the five sheriffs appointed from the mid to late 1650s had royalist associations, again, purely due to the fact there was a dearth of suitable candidates.[114]

## Aims, methods and sources

The aim of this thesis is to correct the lack of any real and detailed examination of county governance in Shropshire during the mid-seventeenth century, as there have been no previous standalone studies on the subject, and will build on the foundations of the works of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries scholars such as Gough, and Owen and Blakeway, Auden and Phillips, and other contributors to the *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society* from the 1878 onwards, whose work remains a vital resource in understanding and researching the county's history. In this work, all the strands of county society and governance will be brought together, and consideration given not only to the county families, their relationships and interactions, but also the economy and differences in religious practices, and local government structures and personnel during the war years and beyond. The financial aspects of the war in the county, taxes and assessments levied, the justice system and the administration of the Poor Law will also be considered, along with a consideration of how the war affected the general population.

This thesis builds upon the existing historiography. Although it is not an inquiry into Everitt's county community theory or a study of a perceived county community as such, not least because Everitt's theory is no longer current, it does build on the renaissance of county studies stimulated by Everitt's important thesis and the – often and increasingly critical-reaction which it engendered. In some ways this thesis builds upon the work on the personnel and administration of Shropshire undertaken by nineteenth and early twentieth century local historians and antiquarians, but takes that work much further and places it within the historiographical context of the early twenty-first century. There is no

[114] *Ibid.*, pp.189-190.

modern study of Shropshire that does this and thus this thesis fills a historiographical lacuna, but it does build on similar modern assessments of the Marcher counties of Cheshire by John Morrill, Gloucestershire by Andrew Warmington, as well as of Warwickshire by Ann Hughes, Hampshire by Andrew Coleby and Sussex by Anthony Fletcher. All these county studies have therefore been assessed and surveyed in this introductory chapter, all provide a historiographical context for analysis which follows in the main chapter, and several of these county studies, especially those on the Marcher counties of Cheshire and Gloucestershire, are explicitly returned to in the concluding chapter, comparing the patterns of personnel and administration there with the findings for Shropshire. .However, it will be shown that that none of these other counties or county studies provide a model which Shropshire followed closely or a template to which the history of the personnel and administration of Shropshire neatly conformed. For one thing, unlike most other counties, Shropshire was entirely under royalist control from the outbreak of war and was slowly conquered by parliamentarian forces from 1643, though it remained a divided county until the fall of Ludlow in summer 1646 and thus effectively until the end of the principal civil war. Although similarities with the history of other county administrations in the 1640s and 1650s become apparent and will be highlighted where appropriate, in many ways in this respect mid-seventeenth Shropshire appears unusual and perhaps unique – though only further work on still rather neglected English and Welsh counties would prove that.

The gentry mentioned in this thesis will include not only armigerous families but also those seen as gentlemen by their friends and associates, as well as those in the law and trade. These last two groups will be included, as within the county, particularly in Shrewsbury, powerful and wealthy merchants and lawyers were already involved in local affairs, usually as part of the corporate administration, but also, during the Interregnum, as members of the Commission of the Peace. The work is necessarily limited to the more socially upward county gentlemen, simply for the practical reason that most yeoman farmers, merchants, apprentices and labourers left no archival footprint behind them; but it is hoped that this study is as inclusive as the surviving evidence allows it to be.

This thesis relies heavily on primary sources, the originals of which have been viewed wherever available, but it must be accepted that some archival sources, particularly royalist documents and correspondence, no longer survive. The Shropshire Archives have provided most of the primary source material, including the Quarter Sessions and mayoral records of Shrewsbury over the mid seventeenth century, which are in the main intact, together with the patchier surviving borough records of Much Wenlock, Ludlow and Bridgnorth; a major gap in the extant records are those of the Shropshire county Quarter Sessions, which do not survive in full over this period. Further borough records have been consulted at Oswestry and Bishop's Castle. Administrative, financial and family papers have been used both there and at the National Archives, the National Library of Wales, the parliamentary archives, and Lichfield, Stafford and Northampton archives.

The quality and quantity of the primary sources available vary considerably. Shropshire had six towns with corporate status, and the archival evidence available for each one differs widely. Although the corporation records for Shrewsbury for this period have long disappeared, plenty of other sources for Shrewsbury in the 1640s and 1650s survive, including the assembly book, which contains the details of the local burgess admissions. Great use has been made of the original mayoral accounts and Quarter Sessions papers, which, in the case of the former have been kept intact for every year of the period being considered. At the other extreme, the records for Oswestry are so sparse as to be deemed effectively non-existent, and those of Bishop's Castle are only slightly better. So far as Much Wenlock is concerned, the records of the bailiff's court, which only dealt with civil disputes, are complete, other records less so; soon, however, more records will be available as the minute book of the Wenlock corporation is being transcribed by volunteers. The other remaining towns of Bridgnorth and Ludlow have relatively good archival holdings, the latter more so, particularly on the financial aspects of town life. There is also a relatively large amount of parish records for the period still in existence for various parishes throughout the county. So far as the quarter sessions papers are concerned, the records for the Shrewsbury Quarter Sessions are the fullest in terms of volume, but years are missing; Ludlow has papers for every year the Quarter Sessions sat apart from 1645, but there is little information revealed

in the surviving records. There are no surviving Quarter Sessions papers for this period for Oswestry and Bishop's Castle, and those remaining for Bridgnorth cover only a couple of years and deal mainly with prosecutions for the illegal selling of ale.

Much of the national source material has been found in various volumes of *The Calendar of State Papers, the Journals of the House of Commons* and *House of Lords*, the *Thurloe State Papers*, and Firth and Rait's *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum 1642-1660.*[115] There has been consideration of the original compounding papers at the National Archives for many of the Shropshire sequestrations, along with the crown docket books. Other vital printed resources available via Early English Books Online have been utilised extensively, particularly the newsbooks and published speeches and accounts of the day. The volumes of the *History of Parliament* edited by John Ferris and Andrew Thrush for the many members of Parliament that are discussed in this work have proved vital not just for their biographical information but for pointing to surviving papers and other sources.[116] Similarly, the various volumes of the *Victoria County History* have been very valuable both as a secondary source and as a pointer to primary material, but, due to the large amount of material they cover , they can be quite short on detail, particularly Volume III which deals with county government.[117] Few personal papers survive, but substantial use has been made of secondary sources in that regard, particularly the Corbet family biography, the published translations of the Ottley papers which appear in several early volumes of the *Transactions*, the handwritten transcripts of which compiled by Phillips are lodged with the National Library of Wales, and the two volumes of the *Herald's Visitation* of the county in 1623.[118] The *History of Shrewsbury* would normally be classified as a secondary source, but for the purposes of this work it has been used as a primary authority, purely due to the fact that the vital corporation records are no

[115] *A & O*, Parts I and II.
[116] *HoP, 1604-1629*, Volumes 1-6.
[117] *VCH*, Volumes II, III, IV, VI Part 1, VIII, X and XI.
[118] Augusta Brickdale Corbett, *The family of Corbet, its life and times*, 2 Volumes (London: St Catherine's Press, n.d.). William Phillips, 'The Ottley Papers relating to the Civil War', *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VI (1894), pp.27-78, Volume VII (1895), pp.241-360, Volume VIII (1896), pp.199-312, and 4th Series, I (1911), pp.233-318. Also in print form SA:6001/257. National Library of Wales: GB0210 PITFORD – Pitchford Hall Ottley Papers. *HV*, Volumes I and II.

longer in existence, but were obviously still available when Owen and Blakeway compiled their work. The difficulty with using such items as a primary source is that any document is always open to interpretation by the author, and there are no originals to compare them with. Thankfully, the work has been fully footnoted, and there are other corroborative sources, such as original tracts and newsbooks of the day.[119]

So far as truly contemporary works are concerned, use has been made of the section on Shropshire from Leland's *Itinerary*, and Thomas Cox's *Magna Britannica.*[120] Another valuable contemporary resource has been the unique work of Richard Gough on the history of his village of Myddle, which is a complete micro-history of a small parish between Wem and Shrewsbury. It is taken mainly from personal observances and knowledge, full of interesting insights into daily life in a very small village, providing the reader with a real-world insight into life in the seventeenth century. At first glance, it may seem to be the grandiose remembrances of a well-to-do Shropshire yeoman, yet it is an important insight into how national events impacted on an extremely small community, including the mustering of local men, and the depredations of war both in terms of life and property. Despite a few errors in the work, Gough's book provides an invaluable picture of the daily lives of a small English village during the seventeenth century, and for its class and type the work has never been bettered.

The secondary sources used are numerous and range from the mid-nineteenth century through to the modern day. Many articles from the *Transactions* have been drawn upon, alongside other nineteenth-century publications which will be referred to during the work on matters ranging from the county administration and justice systems through to family biographies, trade and religion. Bellett's work on Bridgnorth, and Garbett's on Wem, together with the more general work on the county towns edited by

[119] *HoS*.
[120] Thomas Cox, *Magna Britannia et Hibernia, antiqua & nova; or a new survey of Great Britain – Shropshire* (1720).

Auden, have all proved valuable.[121] Concerning the civil war, the works of Stackhouse Acton, Farrow, and, to a lesser extent, Phillips, have been considered.[122] Stackhouse Acton's illustrated work starts with a brief précis of the events that occurred during the civil war, before detailing the county garrisons, and is a useful reference book. Farrow provides additional useful information such as the populations of the towns in the county, the hierarchy of pre-war administration in Shrewsbury, the local MPs and their allegiances, the interrelationship between various families, and those who served on the local parliamentarian committee of 1642.[123] Phillips's work deals mainly with events on the Welsh side of the border, but does include Brereton's forays into the county, as well as documenting Capel's various woes. Published in two volumes, it is the second part of his work that holds more significance for Shropshire, as it includes military correspondence and pamphlets, including the parliamentarian account of the taking of Shrewsbury in 1645, and the royalist siege of Oswestry, along with numerous lists of prisoners taken during the conflict.[124] Phillips does not really deal with matters outside the ambit of the war, but it is a good reference book for the military manoeuvres that occurred within the county.

As for the county towns, Bridgnorth fares well under Bellett's ministration, even though it was a potted royalist history of the period, but he dealt with the wartime civil administration of the town well, particularly the aftermath of the fire that destroyed large parts of the centre in 1646, and gave a detailed account of the siege of the town immediately prior to the conflagration.[125] A similar work, of a more sombre tone, is *The History of Wem* by Garbett. This is a general guide, not only to the town, but also to the surrounding areas which made up part of the North Bradford hundred.[126] Very little of his work

[121] G. Bellett, *The Antiquities of Bridgnorth* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1856). Samuel Garbett, *The History of Wem* (Wem, 1818). J. E. Auden, ed., *Memorials of Old Shropshire* (London: Bemrose and Sons Ltd., 1906).

[122] Frances Stackhouse Acton, *The Garrisons of Shropshire 1642-1648* (Shrewsbury: Leake and Evans, 1867). W.J. Farrow, *The Great Civil War in Shropshire 1642-1649* (London: Wilding, 1926). J.R. Phillips, *Memoirs of the Civil War in Wales and the Marches, 1642-1649*, 2 Volumes (London: Longman Green & Co, 1874).

[123] Farrow, *Shropshire*, pp.5-6,16-17,110-111,131.

[124] Phillips, *Memoirs*, pp.179-181,235-238.

[125] Bellett, *Bridgnorth*, pp.131-135,140-143,163-167,185-193.

[139] Garbett, *Wem*, p.1.

is devoted to the war, and for the purpose of this study, the only information of interest provided was the account of Capel's abortive attempt to capture the garrison for the crown.[127] There is some question over the reliability of his source material, given the lack of referencing, but overall his work provided interesting information about how a small town and its environs were administered.

Owen and Blakeway's two-volume work took a more methodical, and detailed, approach to the period. They dealt with the events in Shrewsbury leading up to the war, the war years themselves, and then beyond through to the restoration, including the rebellions in the area during the 1650s and the reign of Major General James Berry in their deliberations. The work was well referenced, and many contemporary sources were utilised, and although the authors obviously had royalist sympathies, it was overall a neutral piece of research. They believed that Cromwell's government was 'unconstitutional and severe,' but that it was 'not cruel' in Shropshire, and give faint praise to Major General James Berry, for immediately releasing several imprisoned royalists upon his appointment, in what they call a 'judicious act of leniency and favour.'[128]

More modern works on the trades, population and topography of the area such as Rowley's on the Shropshire landscape and agriculture, the unpublished works of Champion on the commerce and population of Shrewsbury, and Mendenhall's study of the local wool trade have all been all of value in providing background information.[129] Mendenhall's work dealt with the industry over two centuries, but gave great insight into how the Drapers Company of Shrewsbury became so powerful, particularly in the early seventeenth century. The work was thoroughly researched, and, despite the fact that he was writing well before Everitt, Mendenhall managed to dispel the latter's theory of county insularity, by

[127] *Ibid.*, pp.215-223.
[128] *HoS*, Volume 1, pp.473-474.
[129] Trevor Rowley, *The Shropshire Landscape* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972). W.A. Champion, 'Shrewsbury Tolls and Commerce' (unpublished typescript in Shropshire Archives, 1986), and 'Population Change in Shrewsbury 1400-1700' (unpublished typescript in Shropshire Archives, 1983). T.C. Mendenhall, *The Shrewsbury Drapers and the Welsh Wool Trade in the XVI and XVII Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953).

demonstrating that the local merchants, and many of the gentry had trade ties in London, Bristol, and Wales; furthermore these men were not adverse to petitioning the crown or bringing law suits in order to protect their business.[130] The Shropshire gentry were not like their counterparts in Kent, and were happy to be involved in trade, as illustrated by the fact that between 1572 and 1660, around forty percent of the members of the Drapers Company were the sons of gentlemen. For families in Shropshire there was no shame in getting involved in trade, for not only was it a means of support for younger sons, but, in some cases, a chance to revive family fortunes.[131] Mendenhall's work is a superb illustration of how powerful some merchants, when banded together as a guild or company, could be. The Shrewsbury drapers saw off all competition in the surrounding areas through petitions and law suits, and had a great influence on the town, as sixty-two of the town's mayors and bailiffs were drapers.[132] The religion of many also shaped the town during the 1630s, as many merchants were Puritans and opposed Laudian reforms, but they also had the money to pay godly men publicly to preach, and thereby promote Presbyterianism as opposed to the high church style of worship favoured by Charles I. In a further article on the social status of the drapers, Mendenhall reckoned that twenty-five families founded draper dynasties, but they were more interested in wealth than power, which somewhat contradicts his earlier assessment of their role within the administration of the town.[133] Some, however, did use their wealth to gain power as was seen in the case of Thomas 'Rich' Jones, Shrewsbury's first mayor, whose wealth on death was estimated as being between £30,000 and £40,000 and included properties in Shropshire, Denbighshire and Montgomeryshire. Jones was not the first choice for mayor, but a substantial donation to the restoration of St Paul's Cathedral ensured that he was appointed in 1638.[134]

[130] *Ibid*., pp.40-78, 141-162.
[131] *Ibid.,* pp.88-91.
[132] T.C. Mendenhall, 'The social status of the more prominent Shrewsbury Drapers 1560-1660', *TSANHS*, Volume LIV (1951-53), pp.163-170.
[133] *Ibid.,* pp.165-166.
[134] *Ibid.,* p.167.

Faraday's history of Ludlow is a more modern account, but, as it spans a period of nearly 600 years, only a brief section is devoted to the civil War and Interregnum.[135] The information provided, therefore, is sparse, but useful, and Faraday deals with the question of the town's allegiance, its internal conflicts during the war between civilians and soldiers, and the fact that despite the upheavals the town officials remained broadly the same wherever their sympathies lay.[136] Another, more general, work referred to, is Hutton's *Royalist War Effort*, which touches upon Shropshire during the war years. Even though it deals with the war in the Marches it has provided useful information concerning the financing of the war, the local Commission of Array, the Clubmen movement and the local reaction to the conflict. However, as with Faraday's work, the study has been a point of reference only, and the original existing archival evidence has been considered whenever available. Other modern works that have been of use include Ruscoe's comprehensive guide to the landholders and their estates in north Shropshire, which was published in nine separate volumes.[137] Sylvia Watt's thesis on the small market towns of Shifnal, Wellington, Wem and Whitchurch has been considered but not particularly referred to during this thesis, as it deals mainly with population change and social and economic development in those towns, which are not relevant to this study.[138] Last, though not least, Wanklyn's studies have been of great value. He has compiled several studies on various aspects of county life, together with his PhD thesis on the allegiance of the gentry during the war, which have also been referred to in this study.[139]

[135] Michael Faraday, *Ludlow 1085-1660. A Social, Economic and Political History* (Chichester: Phillimore & Co, 1991).
[136] *Ibid.*, pp.171-172,174,177-178.
[137] Anthony Ruscoe, *Landed Estates and the Gentry. An Historical Study of the Landed Estates of North Shropshire*, Volumes 1-9 (Ormskirk: self-published 1998-2009).
[138] Sylvia Watts, 'The small market town in the large multi-township parish: Shifnal, Wellington, Wem and Whitchurch c.1535-c.1660', (PhD thesis, Wolverhampton University, 1995).
[139] M.D.G. Wanklyn, 'The Severn Navigation in the Seventeenth Century: Long Distance Trade of Shrewsbury Boats', *Midlands History*, 13 (1988), pp.34-58. 'John Weld of Willey: Estate Management 1631-1660', *West Midlands Studies*, 4 (1970/71), pp.63-71. 'Land Ownership, political authority and social status in Shropshire and Shropshire 1500-1700', *West Midland Studies*, 11 (1978), pp.23-28. 'Landed Society and Allegiance'.

So far as family histories are concerned, the Corbets have been documented in detail by Corbet, and, to a lesser extent, the Newports have been studied by one of their descendants, George Bridgeman.[140] Yet there are very few personal papers remaining from the period, and often, more modern biographies have been considered. Coulton has provided biographies of both Humphrey Mackworth and Thomas Hunt, but they are rather a disappointment, as they provide no more detail than can be found in the *Victoria County History*, or the entry on Mackworth in the *ODNB* by Gaunt.[141] Johnstone's article on Humphrey Mackworth and his son is certainly more engaging, providing more information and insight into Mackworth senior's career and the difficulties he encountered during his governance of Shrewsbury.[142]

An important aspect of this thesis will be the practising of religion in the county during the period, and how it affected people's loyalties during the war. These aspects have been examined by Coulton in this century, and Auden in the last. Coulton's work, although well written, is not without fault.[143] In fact, work undertaken by Watts on the impact of Laudianism in the county is of far more use.[144] The long time span that Coulton's book covers makes it nigh on impossible to pay any decent attention to the subject at hand, as she has a tendency to discuss the nationwide changes of both religious observance and governance, and then if possible link them to Shrewsbury rather than vice versa. She does, however, describe in detail the opposition by some of the town's population to preachers such as Studley who followed the practices promoted by Archbishop Laud.[145] Yet, she brushes over the classis system and the general lack of referencing makes it difficult to pinpoint her source material.[146] Auden took a radically different approach to the subject; in a well written and properly referenced article on the

[140] George Orlando Bridgeman, *The Genealogical Account of the Family of Newport of High Ercall in the County of Salop* (*Afterwards Earls of Bradford*) (Bridgnorth: W J Rowley, undated**).**
[141] Barbara Coulton, 'Thomas Hunt of Shrewsbury and Boreatton', *TSANHS,* Volume LXXIV (1999), pp.33-42. *VCH*, Volume III, pp.110-114. Coulton, 'Humphrey Mackworth: Puritan, Republican, Cromwellian', *Cromwelliana* (1999), pp.7-23.
[142] Hilda Johnstone, 'Two Governors of Shrewsbury During the Civil War and Interregnum', *English Historical Review*, 26, No. 102 (April 1911), pp.271-272.
[143] Coulton, *Regime and Religion*.
[144] Sylvia Watts, 'The Impact of Laudianism in the Parish: The Evidence of North Staffordshire and Shropshire,' *Midland History,* 33, No. 1 (2008), pp.21-42.
[145] Coulton, *Regime and Religion*, pp.65-88.
[146] *Ibid.*, p.107.

ecclesiastical history of the county during the period, he provided full details of how the classis system was devised and established, and then replaced in 1654 by triers and ejectors, until the return of ejected ministers during the restoration.[147] Then, with reference to Walker's *Sufferings of the Clergy*, he compiled a list of ejected ministers, adding to the numbers from his own research.[148] Auden also makes reference to the influence the clergy had on the progress of the war, detailing how, after the fall of Shrewsbury the ejection of loyal clergy began and they were replaced by non-conformist preachers, so that by the end of the war the Puritans effectively held all the power.[149] This point has been taken up by Eales who believed that both King and Parliament set great store by the loyalty of the clergy.[150] Coulton does not address this issue *per se*, but does discuss the rifts that arose within the county over the Engagement.[151] The Oath of Engagement was a declaration of loyalty to the Commonwealth.. It was initially made mandatory for members of the Council of State after the execution of Charles I, and in October 1649 extended to all MPs, clergymen, court, government and university officials, and members of the armed forces. Finally, in January 1650 Parliament passed an ordinance which made the taking of the Oath compulsory for all males over the age of eighteen. The exact wording of the Oath was 'I do declare and promise, that I will be true and faithful to the Commonwealth of England, as it is now established without a King or House of Lords.'[152]

As this study will predominantly focus on the administrators and administration of the county, Fletcher's *Reform in the Provinces* has provided many avenues of further enquiry, and has been an invaluable research tool.[153] Fletcher comprehensively dealt with the important aspects of county life, namely justice, security, poverty and social order, giving full accounts of how the Quarter Sessions, the

[147] *Ibid.*, pp.241-245.
[148] J.E. Auden, 'Ecclesiastical History of Shropshire during the Civil War Commonwealth and Restoration', *TSANHS*, 3rd Series, Volume VII (1907), pp. 241-310. Rev. John Walker, *The Sufferings of the Clergy of the Church of England during the Great Rebellion*, (London: Wertheim, Macintosh and Hunt, 1863).
[149] Auden, 'Ecclesiastical History of Shropshire', pp.246,252.
[150] Eales and Hopper, eds, *The County Community*, p.27.
[151] Coulton, *Regime and Religion*, pp.113-114.
[152] *A & O*, Volume II, pp.325-329.
[153] Anthony Fletcher, *Reform in the Provinces, the Government of Stuart England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

Assizes and Grand Jury system worked. He also detailed the development of the Petty Sessions from 1630 onwards, and discussed the actual enforcement processes undertaken by officials, such as the high constables, who were necessary to ensure the justice system ran smoothly.[154] He pointed out that control of the Commissions of the Peace was crucial to both King and Parliament in their struggle for power.[155] In some counties, such as Devon, the old ruling elites, who had supported the King, firmly maintained control over their own personal areas; furthermore in Cheshire, those in power did their best to ensure that JPs from good county families regularly sat.[156] In fact in many counties those who had been forced off the bench slowly returned to play their part, and during the Protectorate it was generally felt that continuity and the presence of moderate voices was the key to success. At the restoration, however, many non-royalists were removed from their positions.[157] In Shropshire's administrative structure there was no real co-operation between former royalists and parliamentarians, certainly so far as the appointment of the sheriff, the members of the Commission of the Peace and Shrewsbury corporation officials were concerned. Those who had supported the King were effectively barred from the county's administration until towards the end of the Protectorate, and even then it was only those with royalist connections rather than active supporters of the monarchy who were appointed, and in the main most local officials who had supported Parliament lost their position at the restoration. Another useful work on administrative matters is Aylmer's *The State's Servants*, which dealt with both central and local government during the Commonwealth and Protectorate.[158] It examined the various committees and commissions that were established, the finance and revenue of the country and the terms of employment and corruption of officials. It also discussed the effects that the new regime had on society, from the execution of the King through to the restoration of Charles II.

The rule of the major generals from 1655 is a vital part of this study. Shropshire was governed by Major General James Berry, who left little by way of personal papers. His biography, by a distant relation, is

[154] *Ibid.*, pp.123-135.
[155] *Ibid.*, p.12.
[156] *Ibid.*, pp.15-16.
[157] *Ibid.*, pp.17-19.
[158] G.E. Aylmer, *The State's Servants. The Civil Service of the English Republic 1649-1660* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973).

a sparse volume, and is really a potted history of the civil war and Interregnum with relevant details of the major's career inserted where appropriate. Berry had a large area to cover, and seems to have spent little time in the county. He was seemingly well received, but, as will be seen, the *Thurloe State Papers* reveal that he was less than impressed with the local administration. Durston's book on the subject is obviously more academic, and deals with the politics of the time as well as personal details. He expanded on the work of David Rannie, and agreed that the Victorian view of the major generals being upstart Puritan killjoys who were deeply unpopular was untrue.[159] Their remit was to enforce law and order throughout the country, in a moral as well as legal sense, by supressing revolts, ensuring that the poor were provided for and that the roads were safe for travellers. Generally, they were to encourage a godly lifestyle, and would tax former royalists in order that their mission be carried out.[160] Durston divided his work into manageable and well referenced sections, dealing with the trials and tribulations that they had to deal with, including clashes with local administrators, and having to work with unsatisfactory officials. There are only brief references to Berry's work in Shropshire, but it is noted that he sat on the Quarter Sessions in Shrewsbury on 8th January and 17th July 1656, and that within the county he was generally accepted.[161] He was particularly conscious of the financial constraints placed on him, and was anxious that the assessments of the decimation tax should not be too detrimental on the local populace, but was strict towards those whom he considered to lead an idle or lewd lifestyle, and, according to Durston, ensured that illegal ale houses were closed.[162] Yet what Durston does not make clear, but Coleby does, is that in many areas the local Magistrates were already swift to act on such illegalities.[163] Certainly in the Shrewsbury Quarter Sessions papers there is evidence that the justices were more than willing to deal with offences of that nature, and had been since before the war.

[159] David Watson Rannie, 'Cromwell's Major-Generals', *The English Historical Review,* 10, No. 39 (1895), pp. 471-506.
[160] Christopher Durston, *Cromwell's Major Generals: Godly Government during the English Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp.229-23.
[161] Offley Wakeman, ed., *Abstract of the Orders made by the Court of Quarter Sessions for Shropshire* (Shrewsbury: Shropshire County Council, 1901), pp.23-24,26.
[162] Durston, *Cromwell's Major Generals,* p.173.
[163] Coleby, *Hampshire,* pp.53-54.

# Thesis Structure

The work is divided into four substantial chapters together with an introduction and conclusion, and maps and appendices will complete the work. The chapters are laid out chronologically rather than by subject matter, and each one will include issues such as religion, the administration of the county, finance and taxation, justice, and other local matters. It will also discuss in detail, the ever-changing personnel that the county experienced during the period. At the end of each chapter will be a precis of the findings, and in the conclusion to the thesis those findings will be compared with the experience of other counties where possible and relevant. The first chapter will deal with background issues, such as the local gentry families, landholdings and position in county society. Alongside that will be discussed the basics of the county administration system, including a full examination of corporate towns, religious differences, which in no small part formed people's allegiances during the wars, and transport and trade. The second chapter will move on to the war years, up until 1646 when Parliament finally gained control over the county. As already indicated this is not a specific study of the war within the county, but this chapter will include a brief illustration of events that occurred within the county, and the personalities involved. Again, the administration of the county during those years will be examined and discussed, including the Commission of Array and the parliamentary committees. This will lead up to chapter three which runs from 1646 and includes the establishment of the Commonwealth and its influence through to the beginning of the Protectorate. Generally, the same social and administrative issues will be considered, as well as the abortive uprising in 1651, and the sequestration of royalist estates and their owners' subsequent compounding. Chapter four is the final instalment, which runs from the beginning of the Protectorate to the restoration of Charles II. In this chapter, issues such as further rebellions and proposed uprisings in 1655 and 1659 will be dealt with in detail, along with the reign of Berry. The chapter will not end with the restoration of the King, but goes on to does deal with certain issues that arose as a result, particularly concerning the changes in personnel during that period. Finally, the conclusion will bring all strands and themes together, and make some comparison with other counties. As stated from the outset this work is not a critique on Everitt's county community

theory, but the parameters used by other county historians will be used and, on occasion, his work on the subject will be alluded to.

# Chapter 1

# The County in Peacetime

## Topography and History

> Wholesome is the aire, delectable and good, yeelding the Spring and Autumne Seede time and Harvest, in a temperate condition and affoordeth health to the inhabitants an all Seasons of the yeere… the soile is rich and standeth most upon reddish clay, abounding in wheat and barley, pit-coales, iron and woods; which two last continue not long in league together. It hathe Rivers that make fruitfull the Land, and in their waters, contain a great store of fresh-fish, whereof Severne is the chiefe and second in the Realme, whose streame cutteth this County in the middest.[1]

The topography and economy of Speed's seventeenth-century Shropshire, with its fourteen urban centres, would still be recognisable today, as it remains a rural area, with a comparatively small population, and is heavily dependent on agriculture for its income. With a land mass of 1,364 square miles it was, and still is, the 'biggest land-lock-shire in England.'[2] At that time the county was highly

[1] SA: C.66 v. f LS 25851/1.

[2] Thomas Cox, *Magna Britannica et Hibernia, antique et nova; Or a new survey of Great Britain, wherein to the topographical account given by Mr Cambden and the late editors of his Britannia, is added a larger history*, Volume 4 (London, 1720), p.601.

wooded, which, according to some contemporary commentators, meant that 'the people… are naturally stubborner and uncivil than in the champion countries' and they were 'mean people who [live] lawless, nobody to govern them, they care for no one, having no dependence on anyone.'[3] Despite Shropshire's remoteness, far from the coast and the capital, the county prospered from the Middle Ages onwards, due to royal patronage, which generally came in the form of town charters, in recognition of the important part that the county had played in controlling the border with Wales. The liberties that these charters allowed were seized upon by the towns and corporations, as well as astute landowners and merchants.

William I, needing to secure England's western border, appointed a group of trusted lords, who were all either kin or close friends to ensure that there would be no Welsh invasion. These Marcher lords were granted the run of vast territories, which they could administer as they pleased, raising their own taxes and applying law and order with no remit to the King's warrant, save in the case of treason. They were the sole governors of their territories and had the power to issue writs and commissions and appoint justices. In fact, they had all the same prerogatives over their lands that the King had over the rest of the Kingdom.[4] The March was divided in three: the north which was granted to Hugh D'Avranches, Earl of Chester; the South which was assigned to William Fitz Osbern, Earl of Hereford; and the Middle March which was controlled by William's cousin, Roger de Montgomerie, Earl of Shrewsbury.[5] He was a tenant-in-chief of the King, and was overlord of most of the county of Shropshire, holding twenty-nine lordships. He was aided by several barons, one of whom Roger Fitz-Corbet held twenty-four manors including that of Caus which he had named after his birthplace in the Pays de Caux region of Normandy.[6] The March became a heavily militarised frontier society, which by 1300 had developed its own distinct culture, with a mix of nationalities, languages, customs and laws. The rest of Norman

[3] Joan Thirsk, ed., *The Agrarian History of England and Wales,* Volume IV, 1500-1640 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp.104,119 - quotes attributed to John Norden and John Aubrey.
[4] R.R. Davies, 'Kings, Lords and Liberties in the March of Wales, 1066-1272', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* 29 (1979), pp. 41-61.
[5] Trevor Rowley, *The Landscape of the Welsh Marches* (London: Michael Joseph, 1986), pp.96-97.
[6] Cox, *Magna Britannica*, p.603.

England saw the area as a world apart from their civilised society.[7] Neither English nor Welsh law and customs applied in the March; instead an amalgam of the two was administered, and continued to be applied even after the Statute of Rhuddlan in 1284 decreed that the structure of the Welsh administration mirror that of England.[8] Yet despite the lawless nature of the region with its kidnappings and robberies, de Montgomerie 'by his Valour and skillful Conduct kept the Welch in Aw, and the whole County in Peace.'[9] These liberties of the March that the lords assumed mainly went unchallenged by the King, up until the thirteenth century, despite the fact that the monarch was the feudal overlord of the barons.[10]

Shropshire became heavily fortified, with even small villages having motte and bailey style defences, so much so, that it seemed to have an almost 'Wall of continued Castles' down its western border.[11] Eyton's much later appraisal divided the defences up into sections. The western edge which included Chirk, Oswestry, Caus, Bishop's Castle and Clun. On the eastern side were those such as Whitchurch, Myddle, Shrawardine, and Stretton. In between, and scattered about the county, were others such as Wem, Red Castle (Powis castle), Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, and Ludlow. Some of the manor houses such as Stokesay, Wroxeter, Moreton Corbet, Cheswardine, Brace Meole and Apley were fortified and/or moated, but many of those gradually became family homes.

There were only a few dominant families on the Shropshire side of the March. The most important were the de Montgomeries, but they forfeited their estates and position after the rebellion of Robert de Belesme in 1102, and several families moved in to fill the vacuum.[12] One of the most senior was the Corbets of Caus, and of lesser importance were the Fitzalans, Earls of Arundel, who had obtained their lands through royal patronage, and who held Oswestry and Clun.[13] The families were constantly trying

[7] R.R. Davies, *Lordship and Society in the Marches of Wales 1282-1400* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp.9-10.
[8] J.H. Baker, *An Introduction to English Legal History*, Third Edition (London: Butterworths, 1990), p.37.
[9] Cox, *Magna Britannica*, p.605.
[10] Davies, 'Kings, Lords and Liberties', p.55.
[11] Thomas Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England*, Volume 2, first published 1662 (London: Longmans, 1811), p.254.
[12] *HoS*, Volume I, pp.44-62.
[13] Davies, *Lordship and Society*, p.35.

to increase their landholdings and power, and so the following centuries saw many internal disputes within the territory, as they still asserted their freedom from the crown's authority. The Fitzalans were adamant that their territories of Clun and Oswestry were part of the March, which meant that they were exempt from royal jurisdiction. Oswestry was described as in 'the March between England and Wales,' and Ellesmere, another Fitzalan landholding, was in the 'March adjoining Shropshire.'[14] The Corbets also asserted that Caus was exempt from royal control, for even though the hundred itself was in Shropshire, its liberties stretched out into the March.[15]

The county also received several royal visitations during the medieval period, and the Courts of the Exchequer, the King's Bench and Parliament attended the area with him in both the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[16] As a reward for the loyalty to the King, many of the towns were granted royal charters, which bestowed certain privileges, rights and exemptions, and the county thrived. But slowly the county's prestigious status as a vital means of defence declined, and its fortifications became obsolete and fell into disrepair. In several settlements suffered as a result, including Caus, which was never a large settlement, but had grown up around the castle. Inherited by the Earl of Stafford in the mid fourteenth century, the castle was left to be used as a hunting lodge; by 1521 it was 'colde, ruinous and decaid' and no more than a 'heap of rubble,' and in 1581 the settlement consisted of one occupied dwelling.[17] Other towns continued to thrive, yet even in these more prosperous areas, the castles and other fortifications began to fall into disrepair. In Oswestry, Norden's 1602 survey of the Lordship described the fact that 'greate waste hath bene done' as seemingly the town's inhabitants had stripped the castle of its stone, timber, iron and lead and destroyed the fore wall.[18] Similarly, Shrewsbury's defences were weakened, and according to Leland, 'the castle hathe bene a stronge thinge, it is now

[14] *Ibid.,* p.15.
[15] *Ibid.,* pp.23-24.
[16] SCC HER number (PRN): 00289 – Parliament sat at Acton Burnell in 1283 and at Oswestry in 1398 during the reign of Richard II – SCC HER number (PRN):00332.
[17] TNA: E.36/150 fol. 23v, 50. Carole Rawcliffe, *The Staffords, Earls of Stafford and Dukes of Buckingham 1394-1521* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p.67. SCC. HER Number (PRN) 00249.
[18] W. J. Slack, *The Lordship of Oswestry 1393-1607* (Shrewsbury: Shropshire Archaeological Society, 1951), p.45.

much in ruine'.[19] Yet no major repairs seem to have been undertaken, as a century later the walls to the castle had 'gaping chinkes.'[20] At that time it was being used as the town gaol, and its poor state encouraged further vandalism by local youths.[21]

## Towns

Some of the county towns, such as Bishop's Castle, Ludlow, Bridgnorth, Oswestry, Clun and Caus, had developed around the medieval fortifications and had prospered after the granting of a royal charter.[22] Six of the major settlements, Shrewsbury, Ludlow, Bridgnorth, Much Wenlock, Bishop's Castle and Oswestry, were granted corporation status by way of royal charter, which gave great autonomy to those boroughs, and enabled the local officials to manage their own affairs. Even though some dues and taxes had to be paid to the crown, the rights and privileges afforded outweighed that cost. Shrewsbury certainly felt so, as efforts to obtain a new charter from Charles I cost the corporation £521 10s 2d.[23]

Shrewsbury was generally accepted as being the principal town of the county; certainly, it was the largest both in terms of population and wealth.[24] It had benefitted over the centuries from royal largesse in the form of charters granting many rights and privileges. Unfortunately, the earliest grants have not survived, but it is believed that Henry I conferred the first charter on the abbey in the opening quarter of the twelfth century, whilst his grandson Henry II granted privileges to the town itself. [25] The first

[19] Lucy Toulmin Smith, ed., *The Itinerary of John Leland in or About the Years 1535-1543*, Volume II (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964), p.82.
[20] Speed, *The Theatre of Britain*.
[21] SA:3365/2639.
[22] Rowley, *Landscape of the Welsh Marches*, pp.173-182.
[23] SA:3365/582.
[24] W.G. Hoskins, *Local History in England* (London: Routledge, 1984). Between 1334 and 1662 the town was no lower than 26th in terms of population (1523-7), in 1334 it was 7th and 13th in 1662, in that year Ludlow was 41st, Bridgnorth ranked no higher than 40th in the medieval period, and did not appear on the 1662 table. Oswestry, Much Wenlock and Bishop's Castle never appeared.
[25] R.W. Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, Volume 1 (London: J.R. Smith, 1854), pp.245-246. Charter would have been dated between 1121 and 1123.

charter still in existence dates from 1189, when Richard I bestowed the town to the burgesses upon a rent of forty marks per year.[26] King John confirmed the rights granted by Henry II, as well as allowing the burgesses to elect their own provosts, and to hold a fair.[27] Henry III established a merchant guild in the town by way of charter in 1227, and throughout his reign conferred further rights and privileges on the burgesses. This meant that their goods were exempt from seizure through debt, and they were personally excused from the payment of murage (a toll established for the repair of town walls) throughout the country. The burgesses were also sanctioned to collect customs on imported goods, the proceeds of which would be used to effect structural repairs.[28] In 1267 the town was granted the right to hold a fair, the numbers of which increased over the centuries, providing a good source of income.[29] In 1542, the bailiffs and burgesses were granted the rights over the dissolved Abbey lands, which brought the area known as Abbey Foregate within their remit, but Shrewsbury's status as a corporation was not established until 1586, when the official charter was signed by Elizabeth I.[30] In 1638, a new charter was granted by Charles I who altered the administrative structure of the town by replacing the burgesses and bailiffs with a mayor, twenty-four aldermen, forty-eight assistants, a recorder and coroner.[31]

By the mid-seventeenth century Shrewsbury, the 'metropolis of the county,' was seen by most as the hub of county life, and Sir William Brereton described it as being 'a very fair large spacious town… it is one of the richest towns in this part of England, Newcastle upon Tine excepted.'[32] Shrewsbury had the largest administrative district when its liberties were taken into account. The town itself was made up of three administrative wards: Castle Ward, Stone Ward and Welsh Ward.[33] The population of the

[26] SA:3365/1. *HoS,* Volume I, p.81. *HMC- The Manuscripts of Shrewsbury and Coventry Corporations, Fourth Report, Appendix: Part X* (1899), pp.2-6.
[27] SA:3365/2-3.
[28] SA:3365/5-10.
[29] SA:3365/11.
[30] SA:3365/36,40
[31] SA:3365/41.
[32] Cox, *Magna Britannica,* p.603. Edward Hawkins, ed., Sir William Brereton, *Travels in Holland the United Provinces England Scotland and Ireland 1634-1635* (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1844) p.186.
[33] *The Shropshire Gazetteer* (Wem: T. Gregory, 1824), pp.811-817. The Castle Ward included part of the Castle Ward within the walls and part of the Castle Foregate and Cotton (Coton) Hill, Great and

town in 1634 was around one thousand and seventy two, rising to over six thousand inhabitants when taking into account the large Abbey Foregate district.[34] The town had been an important centre for trade since 1200, with links to Wales, Ireland, Bristol and the capital, with the main staple being the cloth trade, specifically wool and other textiles that came out of Wales to be finished and traded on.[35] By the mid-sixteenth century, it was not only the wool trade that was flourishing, Shrewsbury had established itself as a successful commercial centre. By 1638 a total of eight fairs were held throughout the year, which generated significant tolls that were collected by the town officials.[36] Under the new 1638 charter the right to collect the tolls was put out to tender, and Francis Hinckes, a draper, paid the corporation £8 5s 10d per year to collect the fees, which that year came to £29 13s 10½d for two fairs alone.[37] Wealthy merchants built themselves substantial town houses to proclaim their wealth and status, but also diverted some of their income into the establishment and repair of public buildings, such as the Old Market House, Old Council House, and Shrewsbury School.[38] Many also took the opportunity afforded by the dissolution of the monasteries to purchase family estates outside the town, whilst keeping a town

Little Berwick, Leaton, Newton, Wollascott, Astley, Clive, Sansaw, Harlescot[t], A[l]bright Lee, Battlefield, A[l]bright Hussey, Preston Gobalds (Gubbals), Merrington, Grinshill, Hadnall, Haston, Hardwicke and Shotton, Smethcot, Alderton, Broughton, Acton Reyno[a]ld, Yorton. The Stone Ward included part of that Ward within the walls, Coleham, Pulley, Betton and Alkmere, Whitley and Welbach, Abbey Foregate, Meole Brace, Nobold, Newton and Edgebould, Sutton and Little Hanwood. Finally, the Welsh Ward included not only the Ward within the town itself, but also Frankwell, Up Rossall (The Isle), Down Rossall, Bicton and Calcot, Onslow, Woodcote and Horton, Shelton and Oxon, Preston Montford and Dinthill, Crowmeole and Gossehill (now in the Radbrook and Bowbrook areas of Shrewsbury), and Hanwood. Also within the liberties was Pimley which was probably within the Castle Ward (p.406) and Longner probably within the Welsh Ward (p.237). In the Charter of 1586 Elizabeth I also included Merival[e] which was a small piece of reclaimed land on the Abbey Foregate side of the river - SA:3365/40.

[34] *VCH*, Volume VI, Part 1, p.136. W.A. Champion, 'Population Change in Shrewsbury 1400-1700' (unpublished typescript in Shropshire Archives, 1983), pp.160-161.

[35] Rowley, *Landscape of the Welsh Marches*, p.199.

[36] King John was the first monarch to grant the town the right to hold a fair – SA:3365/4 (possibly on the feast of St Nicomedes according to Champion, Henry III granted a three day fair on the Feast of St Clements (22nd September) in 1267- SA: 3365/ 12; Edward II granted a three day fair on the feast of St James in 1309, and his successor added another four day fair to be held on the Feast of St Matthew in 1327- SA:3365/16-17. There was also the St Winifred's and Lammas day fairs which were originally in the enclave of Abbey Foregate until the Dissolution, and were held on 22nd June and 1st August. In 1638, the town paid for the right to hold two other fairs, on the Wednesday after Easter and St Andrews day on 12th and 13th December.

[37] SA:3365/519A and Champion, 'Shrewsbury Tolls and Commerce' (unpublished typescript in Shropshire Archives), pp.117-131.

[38] Examples being Ireland's Mansion built in 1575- SCC HER number (PRN): 10319; Richard Prynce's mansion known as Whitehall built between 1578 and 1582 – SCC HER Number (PRN): 10399. SA: 3365/39 (school received a charter from Edward VI on 10th February 1552).

house from which to conduct their business and continue their involvement in civic affairs, as many were burgesses and aldermen.[39]

In terms of prestige, Ludlow was second to Shrewsbury. Its castle had played a vital part in the defence of the area in the past, but later became the main seat of the Council in the Marches of Wales, something that brought not only prestige, but also income to the town. It had four liberties within its jurisdiction: Rock, Further Halton, Overton and Stanton Lacy. Ludlow had relied on the wool and cloth trade for most its income throughout the medieval period, but it was not a staple market and trade declined rapidly throughout the fourteenth century. By the beginning of the seventeenth century the leather trade, which had probably first developed in the thirteenth century, had surpassed the wool and cloth trade in terms of income and importance.[40] In December 1461 Edward IV granted Ludlow corporation status, which allowed the town to hold a weekly market and yearly fair. It also established a merchants' guild, prevented any interference from outsiders in the administration of justice, and exempted the burgesses of the town from tolls. The burgesses were authorised to collect and distribute any monies brought in from fines, as well as being able to seize the lands and goods of convicted felons. They also had the right to appoint their own coroner, erect a gaol, prescribe their own tolls and customs, and send two elected representatives to Parliament.[41]

The town officials consisted of both a high and low bailiff, twelve aldermen commonly described as The Twelve, and a 25-strong common council, known as The Twenty-Five. The origins of The Twelve and Twenty-Five are obscure, but they were certainly in existence at the beginning of the fourteenth century, at least fifty years before the official incorporation of the town.[42] Membership of both bodies was based on an elective system, with the high bailiff being one of The Twelve and the low coming

[39] Examples being the Ottley family who built Pitchford Hall – SCC HER Number (PRN): 13355, and the Leightons who built Plaish Hall – SCC HER Number (PRN): 13238.
[40] Michael Faraday, *Ludlow 1085-1660: A Social, Economic and Political History* (Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 1991), pp.117-127.
[41] SA:LB/1/23.
[42] Faraday, *Ludlow,* pp.26-28.

from The Twenty Five.[43] Ludlow also had a chamberlain, who was responsible for the more minor financial matters, such as the collection of certain rents and subscriptions, but he also managed the repairs to the town's infrastructure and, as he was also high constable, supervised the town's gaol. Further down the pecking order of local administration were the serjeants at mace and common serjeants who were appointed from the ranks of the local burgesses. They were responsible for the collection of financial penalties imposed by the court, and oversaw town discipline and punishment. They were aided in their tasks by the constables for each ward, who carried out the day-to-day policing. Finally, the churchwardens were responsible for making up parish accounts and assessing and distributing alms. The position was generally held by men of standing, as a stepping stone to becoming a member of the common council; for example, Richard Davies was appointed as a churchwarden in 1638 and held every possible official corporation post up until 1660.[44]

Bridgnorth, or Brug(g)(ge), as it was formerly known, was an ancient settlement, which although already settled at the time of the conquest, was moved from its original site at Quatford to the more secure position on the River Severn by Robert de Belesme in 1102, who then fortified the town.[45] The history of the charters granted to the town is very patchy; Henry I allegedly bestowed certain privileges upon the town, whilst confirming its existing rights. There is no documentary proof to that effect, apart from the 1157 charter granted by Henry II which confirmed the privileges conferred on the town by his grandfather.[46] King John allowed the town's burgesses to be free of tolls throughout England (except the city of London) in 1215, and in 1226 they were granted the right to hold an annual fair. The following year, Henry III not only allowed them the receipts from tolls to repair the town walls, but also established a merchants' guild, and the right to deal with their own disputes within the town, free from the interference of the sheriff. Other years saw the burgesses being able to collect customs or murage for the use of the town. In due course, the burgesses were granted exemption from arrest for debt

[43] *Ibid.*, p.31.
[44] *Ibid.*, pp.37-40. SA:LB/3/2.
[45] G. Bellett, *The Antiquities of Bridgnorth* (London: Longmans, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1861), p.21.
[46] Eyton, *Shropshire*, Volume 1, pp.290-291.

throughout the Kingdom, with further provision that they 'could not be convicted by strangers', so all disputes were to be dealt with by local men.[47] However, none of the charters define how the town was to be governed, nor did they delineate the liberties of the town. It appears that official organisation was more by custom than anything else, and seemed to consist of an undetermined number of burgesses, twenty-four aldermen, two chamberlains, two bailiffs (who were also the chief magistrates or praetors), and two bridge masters. Bridgnorth also had the right to send two burgesses to Parliament, and they first attended in November 1295.[48] When the town was incorporated is a mystery; Mason believed that it was sometime before 1159, but Weinbaum is categorical that the date was 1546.[49] Bridgnorth's main advantage was its physical position on the banks of the River Severn, but also on the main Chester to Bristol road. Yet by the mid-sixteenth century, it was a town in decline, as it, too, had relied on the textile industry for its main source of income, supplemented by tanning and brewing.[50] The town had developed a successful cap- and hat-making industry, which it fought hard to protect, even petitioning Parliament to try and reduce outside competition, but the change in fashion meant a general decline in the trade.[51] Leland described the town as 'sorely decayed' and in 1570 an Act was passed to combat 'the great impoverishing and utter undoing of all… Cappers, and to the great Decay, Ruin and Desolation of divers ancient Cities and Boroughs', by ordering that all males over the age of six (except noblemen and the wealthy) be made to wear on Sundays and holidays when travelling outside their locality a 'cap of wool knit, thicked and dressed in England.'[52]

[47] *Ibid*, pp.298-308.
[48] *Ibid*, p.317.
[49] J.F.A. Mason, *The Borough of Bridgnorth 1157-1957* (n.p: Bridgnorth Borough Council, 1957), p.13. Martin Weinbaum ed., *British Borough Charters 1307-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. xxxii.
[50] Rowley, *Landscape of the Welsh Marches*, pp.189-191.
[51] Parliamentary Archives - HL/PO/JO/10/3/178/2: Petition of the cap and hat makers of Bridgnorth that penalties may be inflicted, in accordance with the provisions of the Act 21 Hen VIII, c.9, upon all persons selling French caps and hats at a higher price than that allowed by the said act.
[52] Leland, *Itinerary*, Volume II, pp.85-86. 13 Elizabeth, c.19 An Act for the making of Caps – both Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury were mentioned in the Act as having been affected. *The Statutes at Large from Magna Carta to the Union of the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. IV (London, 1811), pp. 315-316.

Oswestry's archival history is extremely sparse. The Lordship of Oswestry was granted to the Fitzalan family in the twelfth century, and the area was effectively run as a palatinate. It was John Fitzalan, Lord of Arundel, who granted the town its first charter in 1262, which allowed the burgesses the power to make, administer and enforce such 'ordinances and agreements for their betterment and benefit.'[53] Richard II granted the town borough status on 14 August 1399, when the Parliament assembled there, and he also exempted the burgesses and bailiffs from all taxes throughout the Kingdom except for London, and from murage and the seizure of their goods for debt.[54] Furthermore, under the charter, a merchant guild was established, along with the right to build a gaol, and an exemption for the burgesses to be tried in any court except the local one.[55] There was no official charter of incorporation until 1617, but in 1572 Elizabeth I used the phrase 'an auncient Borroughe incorporated by sondrie grauntes and charters' and by decree mandated that the town be run by a common council of twenty-five elected burgesses aided by the bailiffs, as opposed to the previously consensual, but often confusing system.[56] When the Earl of Suffolk inherited the Oswestry lordship, he assumed that seigniorial duties were still owed to him by the town, whereas the burgesses were adamant that they had been granted a great deal of independence by royalty, and wanted to hold onto their rights and privileges. To prevent any further disputes, James I's charter established 'one bodie Corporate and politique'.[57]

Oswestry was a 'town [that] standeth mostly by the sale of cloth made in Wales.'[58] Even as early as the reign of Edward I there is mention made of taxes (murage) to be levied on fleeces, sacks of wool, and loads of cloth and silks embroidered with or without gold that were sold as far afield as Gloucester.[59] The town's cloth market was held every Monday, and for a long time the Oswestry wool trade was greater than Shrewsbury's, as it lay practically on the border, and the traders' ability to speak Welsh

[53] OTC: A20/3.
[54] OTC: A20/2. William Cathrall, *The History of Oswestry* (Oswestry: G. Lewis, 1855), p.24.
[55] Stanley Leighton, 'The Records of the Corporation of Oswestry', *TSANHS*, 1st Series, Volume II (1879), pp.183-213, (pp.197-198).
[56] OTC: A21. 1582, 24 Elizabeth, 22 May, and Leighton, 'Oswestry Corporation', *TSANHS*, 1st Series, Volume III (1880), pp.69-148, (pp.81-88).
[57] *Ibid*., pp.99-102,105-107.
[58] Leland, *Itinerary*, Volume II, p.75.
[59] Cathrall, *Oswestry*, pp.28-29.

simplified transactions.[60] Furthermore, lawlessness in the area made the Shrewsbury drapers reluctant to travel to Oswestry alone for fear of being robbed. The situation became so bad that in 1583, the Shrewsbury corporation decreed that no Shrewsbury draper cross the Welsh Bridge before 6am, and that they should be armed on their journey.[61] Oswestry wanted to hold onto its effective monopoly of the trade, but it was a small town with no cloth hall and a disorganised system of management. Shrewsbury on the other hand had the benefit of a well-funded and organised draper's guild, which, allied to the town's corporation, could afford to litigate over the right to hold the monopoly of the trade. Shrewsbury eventually won most of the trade, and by the 1630s Oswestry's Recorder John Davies esquire declared that the town was 'much decayed and impoverished.'[62]

The final two boroughs were the very small towns of Much Wenlock and Bishop's Castle; how they achieved corporate status remains a mystery. Wenlock consisted mainly of the landholdings of the priory of Wenlock, and in 1468 Edward IV granted it a charter conferring the status of a 'free borough incorporate forever.' The extent of the town's liberties was never clarified, as it was simply stated to be the Parish of Holy Trinity, which seem to have included Wenlock, Atterley and Walton, Wigwig and part of Harley, Wyke and Bradeley, B[o]urton and Callaughton, but other townships and parishes seem to have been added at later dates. Amongst other privileges, the burgesses were exempt from certain dues and did not have to serve with jurors not resident in the borough. The county sheriff and other royal officials had no standing in the borough, so the town very much resembled a palatinate state. The prior of the abbey was the chief burgess who oversaw the election of the borough's bailiff, and after the dissolution that became the duty of the lord of the manor. The borough was also granted its own court, the bailiff's court, which not only heard pleas of land and debt, but also those of trespass (something usually dealt with by the Quarter Sessions). Finally, it had the right to elect an MP, but in fact from 1491 it sent two members to sit in the commons.[63] All the corporate rights of the borough were

[60] T.C. Mendenhall, *The Shrewsbury Drapers and the Welsh Wool Trade in the XVI and XVII Centuries* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p.29.
[61] William Price, *The History of Oswestry* (Oswestry, 1815), p.44.
[62] *Ibid.*, pp.45-46.
[63] SA:1037/19/18 – there is a lot of confusion over the date of the charter, but it was granted in the eighth year of Edward's reign – see translation of the charter A. Burgess, 'A Translation of the

confirmed by a charter granted by Charles I in 1631.[64] Wenlock was a farming community with its associated trades, and in later times some areas were mined for coal. Bishop's Castle was even smaller in size than Much Wenlock. Originally under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Hereford, it was granted the right to hold fairs and markets in 1249 and 1394, and a charter of incorporation was authorised by Elizabeth I in 1572, and confirmed by James I in 1609.[65] It, too, returned two members to Parliament from 1584 onwards.[66]

It may be surmised from the foregoing that the privileges granted by way of royal charter led to economic prosperity throughout the county, the money radiating out from the corporate towns. It also led to a great deal of self-governance and independence amongst the corporations. During the civil war past royal favours were not forgotten, and, overall, the county was a solid supporter of the crown. During the Commonwealth and Protectorate, although the corporate structures remained in place, many of the justices of the peace, the mayors and governors of the towns were altered. Yet, in general, the burgesses, aldermen, councilmen and constables remained the same, throughout the period, allowing the administration of the county to continue seamlessly.

Charters of the Corporation of Wenlock', (unpublished typescript in Shropshire Archives, undated), pp.1-19, 47 - the liberties also seem to include the parishes of Broseley, Madeley, Little Wenlock, Badger, Beckbury, Linley, Ditton Priors, Stoke St Milborough, Eaton, Hughley, Shipton, Gosnall or Posenall and Benthall. *VCH*, Volume III, p.247.

[64] SA:665/5862.

[65] Henrietta Auden, 'The Origin and Evolution of the Towns' in Thomas Auden, ed., *Memorials of Old Shropshire*, (London: Bemrose and Sons Ltd., 1906), p.58. SA:552/23/45-46,49-originals and translations.

[66] *V.C.H.,* Volume III, p.248.

# Trade and Transport

Shropshire was a relatively prosperous region; Beaumont described it as the 'London of the west.'[67] Wanklyn in his thesis argued that the county's income from its main resources, wheat and wool, was relatively low, as the lay subsidy returns for 1610 showed that only 35% of the justices of the peace had an income over £10 and only 25% earned over £20 per annum. Yet, as Hughes has pointed out, the gentry notoriously under-reported their wealth which was often fifty times more than officially stated.[68] By the 1630s the county's income had certainly increased, and a measure of its wealth is evidenced in the, often disputed, assessments for ship money. In 1635 Shrewsbury was assessed at £456 10s, Bridgnorth £51 10s, Ludlow £102, Bishop's Castle £15 10s, Oswestry £51 and Much Wenlock £302.[69] Other county towns up and down the border paid far less, apart from Gloucester which was assessed in the sum of £500. Hereford's assessment was £220, and Chester's was £260.[70] When the figures are broken down for Shrewsbury and its liberties, the highest personal assessments came from within the town walls. In 1635 in the parishes of St Julian's and Holy Cross, both Thomas Jones (later the first mayor of the town) and Sir Richard Prince were assessed at £10 per year. A resident of St Alkmund's parish, Richard Hunt, was assessed at £6 13s 4d, and in St Chad's parish, Robert Betton, another future mayor, was assessed at £5. Assessments of £1 and above were not uncommon within the town walls, and, in the parish of St Chad's alone, there were forty-nine residents who were liable for at least that sum, with Thomas Edwards, Humphrey Mackworth, Thomas Niccolls and Edward Owen all having to pay £4.[71] There were some, though not many, higher assessments within the liberties, with William Barker of Albright Hussey having to pay £5, and Thomas Berrington of Little Hanwood £6. In Ludlow,

[67] H. Beaumont, 'Shrewsbury and Ship Money', *TSANHS*, Volume XLIX (1937-38), pp 27-41, (p.29).
[68] Ann Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire, 1620-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p.30.
[69] *CSPD*, Charles I, 1635, p.364.
[70] *Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, Volume II (London: Eyre and Strahan, 1808), p.470.
[71] SA:3365/221.

the assessment had risen by 1639, with the figure for Castle, Broad Street, Old Street and Corve Street wards coming to a total of £119 9s 2d.[72]

The county economy was heavily reliant on agriculture, with little industrial production, although lead had been mined around Shelve to the south of Shrewsbury since Roman times. There was also some extraction of minerals such as iron, copper and limestone and some piecemeal bell pit coal mining on the Clee Hills.[73] Norden also makes mention of there being lead mining at Coed y Craige or Crickheath forest.[74] It was during the sixteenth century that industrial production took off in Shropshire, particularly around the Severn. Charcoal furnaces were built in various parts of the county; some of the first developers were on the lands of the Earl of Shrewsbury and Lord Dudley at Shifnal and Cleobury Mortimer during the second half of the sixteenth century.[75] A blast furnace was built at Donington Wood in Lilleshall in 1592 by Vincent Corbet, who had the rights to the wood and ironstone there, and around 1610 an ironworks was started at Bringewood near Ludlow, which was well into production by 1637 when Francis Walker took out a twenty-one year lease.[76] By 1638, Sir Basil Brooke had erected his blast furnace on his Madeley estate, having surrendered his letters patent as clerk of the ironworks in the Forest of Dean the previous year.[77] The Brooke estate was originally part of the estates of Wenlock priory. It was rich in iron ore and coal, and there was evidence of some mining at Brockholes in 1322. A bloomery was established by the priory in 1536, but after the dissolution, the estate was purchased by John Brooke, who employed colliers on his land from 1579 onwards. His son and heir Basil, who took over the manor in 1598, established four mines on his land, with most of the coal being sent out of the county, as 'River or Fresh-water-coale, digged out of this county, at such a distance from the Severne, that they are easily ported by Boat into other Shires.'[78] There were also coal workings on the former Wombridge Priory lands, which were purchased by James Leveson, who then sold them on to

[72] SA:LB/8/3/5/1-8.
[73] Rowley, *Landscape of the Welsh Marches*, pp.209-212.
[74] Slack, *Lordship of Oswestry*, p.69.
[75] SCC. HER Number (PRN):00750, 03515.
[76] SCC. HER Number (PRN): 03860. SA:XLS10772, Thomas Hancox, ironworks at Bringewood. Herefordshire Archives: F76/II/353.
[77] Rowley, *Landscape of the Welsh Marches*, p.217. TNA: E 214/124 and E 214/163.
[78] *VCH*, Volume II, p.40. Fuller, *Worthies of England*, p.253.

Andrew Charlton of Apley to work, as well as pockets of mining on the Earl of Arundel's lands in the north-west of the county at Coed yr Alt.[79]

From the Middle Ages onwards, sheep farming was the most profitable and prolific industry in the county, as even the poor and scrubby soils of the upland areas, particularly in the south and west, provided grazing for the Clun or mountain sheep, which had a fine, short fleece.[80] The northern plains, however, started to specialise in dairy farming, and the whole agricultural economy was boosted with the growing of cereal based crops on more than a purely subsistence basis.[81] Rowley has explained that this was helped by the fact that the enclosure movement in Shropshire was generally accepted, and often took place on a voluntary basis. In some cases, in the south of the county, it was the yeoman farmers themselves who instigated the procedure. Shropshire had never really had vast tracts of open field, plots often having been enclosed when woodland had been felled. The first known record of an enclosed croft was in 1321, but from then on, the practice was piecemeal; however, the inquisition of enclosures carried out between 1517 and 1518, estimated that around 1,765 acres and seventy villages had been enclosed in the previous thirty years.[82] The new breed of landlords that had taken over large estates after the dissolution were also often forward-thinking and more profit-orientated. Yet there were still some that maintained the old strip system of farming; the Craven estates, which in Shropshire seemed to have been very poorly managed, still clung onto the old methods, but even then, some of the tenants had started to inclose their rented lands.[83] Not all enclosures were accepted by local tenants, for example, improvements made at Dogmore near Prees by Sir Richard Brereton of Cheshire from 1539 onwards, attracted a petition to the court of requests.[84] There were attempts to improve much of the moss land in the north of the county to use both as meadowland and for peat cutting. Many improvements were made in this regard on the Bridgewater estates in the early seventeenth century. Furthermore, on the Weald

[79] *Ibid*, pp.291-296. Slack, *Lordship of Oswestry*, p.80 – the mine was leased from the Earl of Arundel by Thomas Cowper.
[80] *VCH*, Volume IV, p.94.
[81] P.R. Edwards, 'The farming economy of North-East Shropshire in the seventeenth century' (unpublished PhD thesis, Oxford University, 1976).
[82] Rowley, *Landscape of the Welsh Marches*, pp.140-141.
[83] *VCH*, Volume IV, p.127.
[84] TNA: REQ 2/3/311.

moors the Levesons and the Eytons carried out a programme of drainage, and Sir Andrew Corbet undertook a similar scheme at Harmer Moss near Myddle.[85]

The wool and cloth trade were the most important in the county, yet despite sheep-rearing being prevalent, much of the raw material came out of Wales. The main market and staple for the trade throughout the sixteenth century was Oswestry, with the town being dominated by the trade, but the powerful lobbying of the rival Shrewsbury drapers, whose guild had been granted a royal charter of incorporation in 1461, ensured that by the early seventeenth century they had the lion's share of the trade.[86] In 1609, a royal charter had granted the Shrewsbury drapers a monopoly over the cloth trade in the town, but the Oswestry drapers had no such privilege, and their market was open to all.[87] Eventually by 1621, the Welsh manufacturers, annoyed at having their trade in Shrewsbury restricted, brought the 'Bill of Welsh Cottons' before Parliament; the drapers' opposition to this was unsuccessful, coming at a time when monopolies were generally hated after the disastrous Cockayne project of 1614. The drapers' representatives argued that the Shrewsbury trade would be overthrown if this free trade bill were passed, but Parliament disagreed.[88] To circumvent this problem their lobbyist in Westminster, John Prowde, persuaded the Shrewsbury men to boycott the Oswestry market, thereby damaging the Welsh manufacturers' business. In response the Welsh petitioned the Privy Council demanding that the situation be remedied as there was much poverty within the industry and they did not want to travel to Shrewsbury as they did not understand English.[89] However, the Shrewsbury market was allowed to remain open, and as it was more central for most traders than Oswestry, the Welsh clothiers were eventually forced back into Shrewsbury to do business, and the market at Oswestry became all but obsolete.[90] The industry in Shrewsbury supported not only the drapers, but also those who finished the cloth such as dyers, shearmen and mercers, and the finished products were generally sold at the

[85] Rowley, *Landscape of the Welsh Marches*, pp.166-171.
[86] SA:1831/1/11/6.
[87] SA:1831/1/4/17.
[88] Parliamentary Archives: HL/PO/JO/10/2/2B - 24 April 1621, An Act for the free trade and traffic of Welsh cloths, cottons, friezes, linings, and plains in and through the Kingdom of England.
[89] *CSPD*, James I, 1619-1623, pp.403-404.
[90] Mendenhall, *Shrewsbury Drapers*, pp.193-200.

wholesale cloth market at Blackwell Hall in London, or were sent down the river to Bristol and ports beyond.[91] Another growth area in the county was the tanning industry; the corvisors guild in Shrewsbury increased dramatically in numbers, and there was a great trade in hides with Chester, which was a major leather-working centre. As the town grew, the brewing trade also expanded, the number of licensed ale sellers rising from seventy in the 1560s to two hundred and twenty in the 1630s. By that date there were five common brewers in the town, the most important being William Rowley, who built massive premises in Knockin Street, which Sir William Brereton described as 'a very vast great brew house… the brewing vessels wherein are capable of 100 measures.'[92] Lloyd, in his survey of the ale houses in the town, noted that there were at least thirty-eight by 1660; some such as The Sextry (now The Golden Cross) had been documented as an inn as early as 1475.[93] The town also saw an increase in those practising law and medicine, and there was a developing market for luxury goods such as silks, books, stationery and pipes.[94]

With the county landlocked, it would be easy to assume that all trading in Shropshire was internal between local businesses, but that was plainly not true. Although in the seventeenth century the roads were poor, Shrewsbury had direct access to London. Wool was taken via carrier either through Coventry and St Albans or across the Severn Valley to Stratford then onto Banbury and either Aylesbury or High Wycombe, but it usually took a week to get there.[95] There was also a road link with Chester and then from there onto Ireland by boat, and a main route south to Ludlow and Hereford beyond. Perhaps one of the quickest routes south, however, was via the River Severn, which was navigable from its estuary up to Pool Quay near Welshpool. It was practically toll-free, the exceptions being the corporations of Worcester and Gloucester which demanded payment to maintain their quays. This extremely affordable means of transport made the Severn the second busiest waterway in Europe.[96] The increase in inland

[91] *Ibid*, pp.8,48-49.
[92] Champion, 'Shrewsbury Tolls and Commerce', pp.141-143. Brereton, *Travels in Holland*, p.186.
[93] SCC HER Number (PRN): 10298. L.C. Lloyd, *The Inns of Shrewsbury* (Shrewsbury, 1942), pp.9-50.
[94] Champion, 'Shrewsbury Tolls and Commerce', pp.144,148.
[95] Mendenhall, *Shrewsbury Drapers*, p.35.
[96] M.D.G. Wanklyn, 'The Severn Navigation in the Seventeenth Century: Long Distance Trade of Shrewsbury Boats,' *Midlands History*, 13 (1988), pp.34-58, (p.34).

trade from Shrewsbury using the river led to new quays being built in Mardol and Frankwell, between 1607 and 1608 by the draper Rowland Jenkes.[97] The port books for Bristol and Gloucester suggest that the number of boats, called trows, operating from both Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth during the seventeenth century, was about twelve in total.[98] They made regular journeys, although Shrewsbury normally traded only as far as Bristol, whereas the Bridgnorth boats went as far as Bridgwater, Minehead and Tenby.[99] A variety of goods used the Severn boats as a means of transport. Cheshire salt, Manchester linens and Staffordshire pottery were all sent downstream, along with local coal, wool and cloth; in return the boats brought back spices, sugar, wines, citrus fruit, raisins, tobacco and the less exotic fish oils, raw cotton, iron, pitch tar, wood and animal skins.[100] In 1580 St Mary's church roof was repaired using thirteen thousand slates that had been shipped from Bristol, along with the skilled labour to undertake the work.[101] So, despite a relatively remote location, Shropshire had good trading networks and links with both the capital and the major ports during the seventeenth century. Some of the local merchants also had links with New England; Thomas Lewis, Arthur Mackworth, John Prowde the younger and Daniel Cheshire, all sons of drapers, were known to have purchased land in New England and settled there in the 1620s and 1630s. Others were trading in Maine as the Shrewsbury Adventurers to New England. George Wright was a founding member of this joint venture with Bristol merchants, and left his son £50-worth of stock in the company upon his death in 1636. Wright was very business minded, having been exporting his own wool down the Severn to Bristol since 1617, and saw that there were further opportunities to make money in Maine.[102]

Certainly, the merchants of Shrewsbury and Oswestry proved that they had horizons well beyond the county borders. Ludlow, although not economically as prosperous as the other two, took advantage of the presence of the Council in the Marches, which brought not only revenue into the area, but also

[97] SCC HER Number (PRN): 01473, 04696.
[98] Champion, 'Shrewsbury Tolls,' p.138 - Champion estimates there were two or three boats in the 1620s based in Shrewsbury.
[99] Wanklyn, 'Severn Navigation', p.39.
[100] *Ibid,* pp.45-46.
[101] SA:3365/519.
[102] T.C. Mendenhall, 'Shrewsbury in New England', *TSANHS,* Volume LIV (1951-3), p.338.

allowed the townspeople to forge external links (either business or familial) with others. Despite some county towns flourishing more than others, most took advantage of the relatively good trade links, particularly the river trade. Even the county gentlemen, whom Everitt saw as being very conservative, and fixed in their ways, often proved that they had an entrepreneurial spirit, and were more than happy to improve the landholdings they had either purchased or inherited.[103]

## Society

From the Norman Conquest, up until the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s, the societal make-up of Shropshire was vastly different from that of the seventeenth century. The 'frontier society' mentality had disappeared, as had the old-style palatinate fiefdoms.[104] Most of the old established landed families of the county had disappeared over the centuries, so by the seventeenth century very few of the once elite families remained, although there were many wealthy yeoman and merchant families who had put down roots in the county centuries before.[105] The Corbet of Caus line had failed in the mid fourteenth century, but branches remained in Shropshire, notably at Moreton Corbet, Adderley and Longnor.[106] The Fitzalans (later Howard), the Earls of Arundel, had sold off their Shropshire properties (apart from the Lordship of Oswestry) in the second half of the sixteenth century to satisfy debts. The Oswestry lordship was forfeit to the crown in 1590 after Philip Howard, the thirteenth Earl, was attainted for his Catholicism and treachery.[107] The property was regained by the family in 1603, but was

[103] Everitt, *Kent*, p.35.
[104] Davies, *Lordship and Society*, p.9.
[105] *Ibid.*, p.48.
[106] Augusta Brickdale Corbett, *The family of Corbet, its life and times*, Volume II, (London: St Catherine's Press, n.d.). pp.178-179.
[107] Leighton, 'Oswestry Corporation,' *TSANHS*, 1st Series, Volume III (1880), p.80.

sold by Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk, to Elizabeth Craven in 1624.[108] Even the Talbots, the Earls of Shrewsbury since 1442, held relatively little property in the shire, and were effectively absent from county life. They had gained possession of the manor of Whitchurch through the marriage of Ankaret le Strange to Sir Richard Talbot in 1383. Originally from Goodrich in Herefordshire, the Talbots owned properties in Alton, Staffordshire, and Worksop, Derbyshire, but their most important purchase was that of the lordship of Furnival in the manor of Sheffield. Whitchurch tended to be inherited by younger sons, and in 1598 the 8th Earl, Edward Talbot, sold the manor to Sir Thomas Egerton.[109] The family did, however, retain lands in Cheswardine, Wrockwardine, Great Bolas, Edgmond, Newport and Albrighton.[110]

By the seventeenth century, the two largest landowners in Shropshire were the Egertons in the north and the Cravens in the south. Sir Thomas Egerton, ennobled as Baron Ellesmere and Viscount Brackley, was the illegitimate son of a Cheshire knight, who had risen to become Lord Keeper under Elizabeth I and Lord Chancellor under James I.[111] Having purchased the Talbot estates in north Shropshire, he later married Alice the widow of Ferdinando, the fifth Earl of Derby, and bought their lands in Ellesmere.[112] His son, who became the Earl of Bridgewater, effectively frittered away much of his vast inheritance; he absented himself from the county, preferring the family estates in the south of the country, and upon his death in 1649 he left debts of over £80,000.[113] In the south and west of the county, vast tracts of land had been bought up by Elizabeth, the widow of Sir William Craven, a Yorkshire man and former lord mayor of London. Craven had made his money as a merchant tailor, and money lender, and on his death in 1618 had been worth approximately £125,000.[114] Elizabeth Craven was formerly a Whitmore of Apley Park near Bridgnorth, and in 1622 she bought properties in Oswestry and Ruyton, originally been

[108] *Ibid.*, 1st Series, Volume IV (1881), pp.1-2.
[109] Anthony Ruscoe, *Landed Estates and the Gentry. Part of a Further Study of Landholding in North Shropshire*, Volume 9, *Whitchurch, Wem and Baschurch* (Ormskirk: William Ruscoe, 2009), pp.73-74.
[110] *Ibid.*, Volume 4, *Weald Moors and Newport,* p.55.
[111] *Ibid.*, Volume 9, pp.74-75.
[112] Eric Hopkins, 'The Re-leasing of the Ellesmere Estates 1637-1642', *The Agricultural History Review,* 10 (1962), pp.14-28 (p.14).
[113] *Ibid.*, p.15.
[114] *ODNB.*, entry by Ian Archer.

part of the Earl of Arundel's lordship.[115] William Craven inherited the bulk of the estate upon his mother's death in 1624, which had an estimated rental worth of £10,000 per year. Although he was appointed to the Council of the Marches in Wales in 1633 he had no loyalties or familial links to the county, spending most of his time abroad.[116]

The family who perhaps took the greatest advantage of the now dissolved monastic lands were the Levesons, who bought property belonging to Lilleshall Abbey and Wenlock and Wombridge Priories. Other such purchasers were Sir Rowland Hill, who was born around 1492 at Hawkestone, the grandson of Humphrey Hill of Buntingsdale. He had become a wealthy merchant adventurer in London who probably traded in wool. He lent money to Henry VIII, and was deemed to be one of those who was 'contented to forebear to another day' so far as the King's debts were concerned, and had been made lord mayor of London in 1549.[117] Locally he was a JP, and was appointed to the Council in the Marches in 1551. Working through an agent, William Cotton, he purchased around seventeen manors mainly in the north of the county, between 1538 and 1559.[118] Upon his death, without issue, in 1561, he left the reversion of Crudgington and Kynnersley to his niece Mary Gratewood, who married Sir Richard Leveson; his other niece Alice and her husband Sir Reginald Corbet inherited the manors of Stoke on Tern, Market Drayton and Childs Ercall, and his nephew James Barker was given the manors of Haughmond and Walcot. Barker's father John was steward of Shrewsbury Abbey and had married Elizabeth, Rowland Hill's sister.[119]

The Levesons came from south Staffordshire, and seem to have made their money in the wool trade, as James Leveson and his brother John were both merchants of the staple of Calais. James was extremely wealthy and upon his death in 1547, he left monetary legacies to his wife and two children of just over

[115] Ruscoe, *Landed Estates,* Volume 8, *Ruyton and Knockin,* p.19.
[116] *ODNB,* entry by R. Malcolm Smuts.
[117] James Gairdner, ed., *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, Volume 11, July-December 1536 (London, 1888), p.566. Alfred P Beaven, 'Aldermen of the City of London: Walbrook ward', in *The Aldermen of the City of London Temp. Henry III - 1912* (London, 1908), pp. 216-224. *ODNB,* entry by Ian Archer
[118] Ruscoe, *Landed Estates,* Volume 1, *Haughmond* (1999), pp.5-8.
[119] *Ibid.*, p.9.

£1,500, as well as all his landholdings.[120] As well as properties in his own county, James bought the manors of Lilleshall, Leegomery, Longdon on Tern, Little Wenlock, and Sheriffhales over a period of eighteen years. When his son Richard died in 1561, his will describes him as being from Lilleshall, and there is reference to coal mines on his lands at Oakengates.[121] Marriage into the Hill and Newport families added extra land to the empire.

Another 'outsider' who purchased estates was John Weld, who bought the Willey estate situated within the borough of Wenlock from Sir Francis Lacon in 1616 for £7,000, with the property finally becoming transferred into his name two years later.[122] Weld improved the estate and started mining on the land in the 1630s, boring bell pits and sending the extracted minerals down the Severn.[123] Weld's family originally came from Cheshire, but had moved to London. They were in the haberdashery trade, and his uncle had been lord mayor of London in 1608-9. John Weld was a lawyer by profession, who had married into money, and who had purchased the position of town clerk of the City in 1613. Weld added to his Shropshire landholdings in 1619 and 1620, when he bought the manors of Marsh and Broseley.[124] He made some enemies in the locality in disputes over land borders. He was an astute businessman, and both he and his near neighbours, the Benthalls, laid tracks to transport coal by wagon down to the River Severn, but he was also a ruthless landlord, and bad neighbour, causing disputes over land borders and rights of way.[125] He was sheriff of Shropshire, as well as a Commissioner of Array, in 1642, and he and his son, also named John, were knighted that year.

Many local families also took the opportunity to expand their estates, including the Newport family from High Ercall. Ruscoe believed that the family originally were originally known as Gech and had come from Wales. They had settled in Newport as goldsmiths or money lenders, and had married in to

[120] STA: D593/C/4/5 (26/512).
[121] STA: D593/C/5/1 (28/518).
[122] *SPR*, Willey, Volume 16, Pt. 4 (Shropshire Parish Register Society, 1900), p. iv.
[123] M.D.G. Wanklyn, 'John Weld of Willey: Estate Management 1631-1660,' *West Midlands Studies,* 4 (1970/71), pp.63-71.
[124] Barry Trinder, *History of Shropshire* (London: Phillimore & Co.,1988), p.56.
[125] Wanklyn, 'John Weld of Willey,' pp.63-66. SA:6001/11/239 – Willey and other estates of the Welds.

the de Ercall family who bought Ercall from Sir Peter de Caverswall in the 1390s.[126] Yet according to the pedigree drawn up by Thomas Thompson esquire, Lancaster Herald in 1639, the family came from Nieuwpoort in the Low Countries at the time of the Conquest, and had settled in the county by the reign of King John.[127] Several members of the family had held the office of sheriff over the centuries; Thomas the younger, then known by the surname of Newport, held the post in 1403, with subsequent members of the family serving at various times between 1473 and 1628.[128] Marriages were an important means of increasing landholdings to the Newports, and both sons and daughters allied themselves with several local families, including the Corbets, Bromleys, Lacons, Gratewoods, Sneyds, Lawleys, Foxes and the Herberts.[129] Richard Newport married Rachel, the daughter of Sir John Leveson, and was knighted in 1615 by James I, appointed as sheriff of Shropshire in 1628, and elected as MP for the county between 1614 and 1629. Despite initial hesitation, he became avidly loyal to the King, as did his son Francis, Sir Richard was created a baronet in 1642, upon the gift of a substantial sum of money towards Charles's war coffers. Both father and son had to compound heavily for their sequestrated estates during the Interregnum, but were still seen as the scions of county society.[130]

Another old established family who expanded their estates were the Corbets, but this was more through marriage than purchase. In the mid-sixteenth century, they were worth four times more in monetary terms than the Newports (a position that was to be reversed by the end of the century).[131] In terms of holding office, the Caus line of the family, later extinguished, had been the first to be appointed sheriff in 1249, but none of the Moreton Corbet branch attained the position until 1501.[132] In the mid-sixteenth century Reginald Corbet, a prominent lawyer, married Alice Gratewood, one of the heiresses of Sir Rowland Hill, and they established a dynasty based at Adderley. Upon his death in 1569 Corbet owned

[126] Ruscoe, *Landed Estates,* Volume 2, *High Ercall and Hodnet,* pp.8-9.
[127] George Thomas Orlando Bridgeman, *A genealogical account of the family of Newport, of High Ercall, in the County of Salop afterwards Earls of Bradford* (Bridgnorth: W. J. Rowley, 1851), p.5.
[128] *HV*, Part II, pp.373-374.
[129] Bridgeman, *Newport*, pp.13-19.
[130] William Phillips, 'The Sequestration Papers of Sir Richard, First Baron Newport, and Sir Francis Newport his Son', *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume XII (1900), pp.1-38.
[131] Leland, *Itinerary*, Volume III, p.65.
[132] *HV*, Part II, pp.133-142.

the manors of Drayton, Adderley, Stoke, Hales, Almington and Blore, as well as the village of Childs Ercall and granges at Cliffe, Tern Hill, Burnhill and Cheethill.[133] Eventually the line passed to John Corbet, 'The Patriot,' who was created a baronet in 1627, and made sheriff for the county two years later.[134] He married Anne Mainwaring, whose father owned large estates in Ightfield near Whitchurch. Sir John did not support the King during the civil war. He believed that the taxes and assessments imposed during the years of the Personal Rule were illegal. Blakeway suggested that Corbet had refused to pay his contribution towards the forced loan, resulting in his imprisonment in the Gate House of the Fleet Prison, and was only released after successfully issuing a writ of habeas corpus. This theory was cautiously accepted by Wanklyn.[135] The general consensus today is that it was Sir John Corbet of Sprowston in Norfolk (a distant relative of the Shropshire branch of the family and elder brother of the regicide Miles Corbet) who refused to pay the forced loan along with Sir John Heveningham, also from that county.[136] The Shropshire Sir John was, however, no stranger to confrontation; he was later imprisoned for his role in the county's revolt against the payment of the muster master's fee, and his grievances were only resolved in 1641, when it was announced that the imposition of the £30 muster master's fee was illegal, and that proceedings should be dropped against Sir John, and reparations be made.[137]

Over the previous decade, he had been in dispute with the Needham family of Shavington, later the Viscounts Kilmorrey. The initial disagreement over rights of way, had started with both parties' fathers, but had moved on to who had precedence in the parish church at Adderley; for although Kilmorrey owned the estate of Shavington Hall, which was in the parish of Adderley, Corbet had the advowson of the church, and as its patron had a right to his own private pew, whereas Kilmorrey had to worship with

[133] Corbet, *Corbets*, Volume II, pp.268-269.
[134] *Ibid.*, Volume I, p.xii.
[135] J.B. Blakeway, *Sheriffs of Shropshire* (Shrewsbury: W. and J. Eddowes, 1831), p.111. William Cobbett, *Cobbett's State Trials*, Volume III (London: Longmans, 1809), pp.1-233. M.D.G. Wanklyn, 'Landed Society and Allegiance in Cheshire and Shropshire in the First Civil War', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 1976), pp.49-50.
[136] *CSPD:* Charles I, 1627-28, p.327.
[137] Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 496-497. *CJ*, Volume 2, 1640-1643 (London, 1802), pp.166-168.

the rest of the congregation. For Kilmorrey it was an issue of precedence, and once he had been made a Viscount, he had extreme difficulty in having to defer to Corbet, someone with whom he was 'at daggers drawn.'[138] The dispute escalated with Archbishop Laud supporting Kilmorrey's case.[139] This decision was also to play a part in Laud's later trial, as it was alleged that he had ridden roughshod over Corbet's rights as a patron of the church.[140] Not unsurprisingly Corbet supported Parliament during the wars and was chairman of the Shropshire committee. Yet his son, also named John, fought for the King, as did his cousin Sir Vincent Corbet.[141]

Vincent was one of the King's Commissioners of Array and, as a former commander of a troop of horse within the county, was a fitting leader of men.[142] He came from the Moreton Corbet branch of the family, and upon the death of his father in 1622, he inherited several manors, including that of Shawbury, and other local lands, along with the family seat.[143] He was not made a baronet until 1642, the family had held the office of sheriff three times between 1501 and 1551.[144] A series of marriages with wealthy local families had ensured that the family estates had prospered and expanded, and although the Corbets no longer had the money and power that they had held in the previous centuries, they could claim roots in the county going back to the Norman conquest.[145]

Yet it was not just those who were perceived to be the landed gentry who prospered throughout the county. There were those families such as the Ottleys, Myttons, and Mackworths who had used the profits of the wool trade to buy extensive landholdings and erect large country houses. The difference between some of those families, such as the Mackworths, and others, such as the Newports, was that many still had close and evident links with commercial interests, the younger generation often branching out into the legal profession. However, as their wealth increased some, such as the Ottleys

[138] Henry D. Harrod, *The History of Shavington in the County of Salop* (Shrewsbury, 1891), p.34.
[139] Corbet, *Corbets*, Volume II, pp.352-353
[140] Rushworth, Volume III, pp.1368-1369.
[141] Corbet, *Corbets*, Volume II, p.328.
[142] *Ibid.*,322-323.
[143] Corbet, *Corbets*, Volume II, p.309.
[144] *HV*, Part I, p.136.
[145] *HV*, Part II, pp.136-137.

and the Myttons began to distance themselves from commercial interests, purchased large country estates and established themselves as lesser gentry families. The Ottleys had been in the county from very early in the fourteenth century. Thomas Ottley, a draper, had settled in Shrewsbury, and in 1443 became the first alderman of the town. Between 1439 and 1487 he and his brother held the position of bailiff on an almost constant basis. He was also a JP and a merchant of the staple of Calais. In 1473 he commissioned the building of Pitchford Hall just six miles from Shrewsbury, which from then on became the family seat.[146] His son William, who was also a merchant of the staple, became sheriff in 1500, and the family were linked through marriage to many prominent Shrewsbury families such as the Owens, Irelands, Kynastons and Leightons.[147] Francis Ottley, who was sheriff in 1645, was a prominent royalist; he had raised a troop of men at the behest of the King, and was a Commissioner of Array for the county and appointed governor of Shrewsbury castle in 1643-4.[148] The Mytton [Mitton] family were also wool merchants, who had set up business in Shrewsbury, but had later purchased estates at Halston near Oswestry. Thomas Mytton held the position of sheriff of the county in 1483, and was bailiff of Shrewsbury ten times. They were also allied through marriage to prominent county families such as the Irelands and the Lacons, but there were also unions with Welsh families, presumably having come about through links in the wool trade.[149] Colonel Thomas Mytton fought for Parliament during the war, being much involved in the capture of Wem, Oswestry and Shrewsbury garrisons.[150] The Mackworths were drapers, who by the 1640s had been prominent within Shrewsbury political and commercial life for well over a century.[151] They had been very successful in business, purchasing not only several estates in the north of the county, but also their main estate at Betton Strange just outside Shrewsbury. Humphrey Mackworth did not follow his father into the cloth trade, but was educated at Shrewsbury School and Cambridge University before going into the law. During his legal career, he carried out much work for the corporation, advising it on various aspects of the running of his former *alma mater*, and was appointed recorder for the town. He was appointed an alderman in 1635, but declared himself for

[146] J.E. Ottley, *Records of an ancient family* (London: Selwyn and Blount, 1923), pp.42-44, 50.
[147] *HV*, Part II, pp.380-383.
[148] Ottley Papers, *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VI (1894), pp. pp.27-78, (pp.28-29).
[149] *HV*, Part II, pp.361-362.
[150] Gough, *History of Myddle*, p.77.
[151] SA:3365/67: Assembly Book I (formerly known as A) (1372-1555).

Parliament at the beginning of the war, and so was stripped office, having been branded a traitor. He was active for Parliament throughout the civil wars, and was elevated to the rank of colonel, before becoming governor of Shrewsbury in 1646, a position that he held until being appointed to the Council of State in 1654.[152]

These named families are just examples of those that made up county society in Shropshire, and others will be investigated during this work. It is, however, evident from that small sample, that Shropshire followed the pattern of many other counties concerning the change in the social order after 1538. Yet, it was one of the few counties without any resident, and active, senior peers, so the politics and running of the county was left to those further down the social order, most of whom were not ennobled until well into the seventeenth century. Professional men and merchants were involved in county administration. In Shropshire, there was no real shame in having roots in trade or the law, and many county families had made their fortunes from such endeavours. The Mytton family had expanded their trade operations to London. Peter Mytton, a Merchant Taylor and exporter of Welsh cotton, was one of the younger sons who had made his fortune in the capital.[153] William Spurstowe, later MP for Shrewsbury, had been apprenticed by his shearman father to a Shrewsbury draper, and had spent part of his training in London where he settled and did business, making a substantial fortune.[154] Although most of the families documented did make marriage alliances within the county border, there were also unions with those from Staffordshire, Cheshire and Montgomeryshire. This ties in with Hughes's argument, that the county borders were not solid in a social sense; for example, those on the edge of the Cheshire plain in north Shropshire had more in common with south Cheshire families than those from the uplands around Clun and Much Wenlock; similarly, the western English borders were very similar in both landscapes, trade, and often language to the counties of Montgomeryshire and Denbighshire. Some families did branch out further afield when looking for marriage partners; for example, the

[152] *ODNB*, entry by Peter Gaunt.
[153] Mendenhall, *Shrewsbury Drapers*, pp.50-51.
[154] *Ibid.*, p.65.

Corbets of Moreton allied themselves with families from Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire, Merionethshire and Oxfordshire, as well as enjoying local matches.[155]

The families in Shropshire were not so hide-bound by tradition, these were people who embraced change, improving their land values through enclosure and drainage. Whilst those whose money had come from the trade or the law did not necessarily distance themselves from their source of income, but sought to improve their social standing at every turn. There were many interfamily marriages, but unions between couples from different parts of the country were not uncommon either, many having been brokered through trade links. Shropshire society was also a more inclusive society, but there could be a backlash if it was felt that someone was overstepping societal boundaries, as seen in the case of Sir Thomas Harris of Boreatton.

Harris was a wealthy lawyer and former MP for Shrewsbury, but his grandfather had been a yeoman and father a draper. He employed an agent to fudge his lineage, but some of local gentry took exception, and brought a case against him in the Court of Chivalry as they felt he did not merit a baronetcy.[156] Eventually Harris was found to be 'no gentleman' by the Court of Chivalry but they also admitted that they had no power to revoke the baronetcy, even though his lineage had effectively been forged. The honour stood, and his family became an established part of Shropshire society with his son Sir Paul Harris becoming sheriff in 1637, and a member of the Commission of Array at the outbreak of the civil war.[157] Sir Paul was seemingly as unpopular as his father, being labelled a 'a bucke of the second head', and as 'a Barronett, and a proud imperiouse person, hee tooke place of those of that were of an antient Knight's degree.'[158]

[155] *HV*, Part I, pp.136-137.
[156] Francis W. Steer, *A Catalogue of the Earl Marshal's Papers at Arundel Castle* (London: Harleian Society, 1964), p.2.
[157] Rev. G.W. Fisher, 'Sir Thomas Harris of Boreatton Shropshire, and his family', *TSANHS*, 1st Series, Volume 10 (1898), pp. 77-92. S.A. XLS13152 William Phillips, ed, Sir Thomas Harris, *the tale of an unpopular Shropshire baronet told by himself.*
[158] Gough, *History of Myddle*, p.67.

With status came both deference and some amount of political power; the county seats for Parliament from the mid sixteenth century until the beginning of the civil war were held by a small group of landed families: the Levesons, Newports, Kynastons and Corbets. Even further down the political ladder a substantial land holding (usually over 800 acres) would guarantee an appointment as a justice of the peace, [159] and of course there was always the possibility of a title being conferred upon a landowner in times of financial crisis for the crown.[160] Yet to a certain extent the town of Shrewsbury bucked the trend with the members they sent to Parliament, as they included people such as Lewis Prowde, Thomas Owen and Richard Barker, who, despite having families in trade, had studied the law, married advantageously and had played a large part in town politics.[161] However, there were narrow circles of association, generally limited to close family, business (both trade and corporate), religion, or judicial work. Several of these circles overlapped prior to the civil war, but when the conflict started, many of the ties were severed and not renewed until several years later.

## Religion

In the main, most of the county followed the teachings of the Anglican church, although there was a growing movement towards Puritanism. The 1641 protestation returns for the south-east of the county show that there were no dissenters in Bridgnorth and Much Wenlock, nor in most of the small parishes around those towns. The only refusals came from Benthall (three, although one person claimed illness), Linley (two), and in Ditton Priors there was only one dissenter, Francis Ellice, a known

[159]Malcolm Wanklyn, 'Landownership, Political Authority and Social Status in Shropshire and Cheshire 1500-1700' *West Midland Studies,* Volume 11, 1978, pp.23-28, (pp.25-26).
[160] *Ibid*, p.27.
[161] *HoP*,1604-1629, Volume III, pp.131-3 (Barker), Volume V, pp.573-4 (Owen), p.768 (Prowde).

recusant.[162] There were several Catholic families in the county, and in 1627 nineteen parishes reported a total of one hundred and seventeen recusants.[163] The visitation books for the early seventeenth century do point towards concentrations of Catholics, particularly in the parishes of Albrighton, Ellesmere and Wem.[164] Most of them were discreet about their faith, and proceedings against them by the Commission of the Peace were sporadic. From the late sixteenth century, onwards there was also a growing Puritan movement particularly amongst the townspeople of Shrewsbury. There were also small Puritan congregations in Ludlow and Bridgnorth. In 1596, the Earl of Essex presented the Puritan Robert Horne as a preacher in Ludlow, and in 1637 one of the rectors there, Thomas Colbach, was prosecuted for not wearing his surplice during the service and other infringements of the Laudian style of worship.[165] In Bridgnorth, the godly William Madstar was employed as a public preacher between 1628 and 1641, but his congregation was obviously a small one with little income. Baxter described the townspeople of Bridgnorth as 'very ignorant [and] dead-hearted', so although Madstar was a 'very honest and conscionable, and an excellent preacher' his living was so mean that he had to take on the nearby Oldbury.[166] In Shrewsbury, there was an air of tolerance and acceptance in the town up until the early seventeenth century; for example, Sir George Crane remained vicar of St Alkmund's through all the changes in religious practices from his appointment in 1550 until his death in post in 1591.[167]

Clashes in Shrewsbury over religious practices had really started in the final years of Elizabeth's reign, but there was no common thread of dissension, as it seemed that practices changed from parish to parish. At St Alkmund's it slowly became apparent that the vicar, Humfrey Leech, had self-professed Catholic views. His teachings, however, did not seem to cause outright revolt within his congregation, and one of his former associates, Ralph Gittins, was promoted to be second master of Shrewsbury school despite

[162] SA: O 63 v.f.
[163] Sylvia Watts, 'The Impact of Laudianism in the Parish: The Evidence of North Staffordshire and Shropshire,' *Midland History*, 33, No. 1 (2008), pp.21-42, (p.38).
[164] LRO: B/V/1/29, B/V/1/39, B/V/1/60 all unfoliated.
[165] *CSPD*, Charles I, 1637-8, p.62.
[166] Matthew Sylvester, *Reliquiae Baxterianae or Mr Richard Baxter's Narrative of the most Memorable Passages of his life and times* (London, 1696), p.15.
[167] *HoS*, Volume II, p.277.

suspicions as to his faith.[168] In fact, when the bailiffs of the town refused to endorse the appointment, several townswomen laid siege to the school in protest against their actions.[169] Gittins remained in place until the Court of High Commission deemed that he was 'unworthy for the second place in respect of his wavering and unsteadiness in religion,' that he was imprisoned and suspended from teaching.[170] Yet at St Mary's, there was a tradition of Calvinistic preaching under the incumbent William Bright. The, now lost, parish records, reveal that the church had complied fully with the changing religious practices in Tudor times, noting a swift turnaround from ordering frankincense and erecting altars in the reign of Queen Mary, to demolishing the said altars some eight years later when Elizabeth was on the throne.[171] Within the town, there was a growing demand for a 'godlier' style of worship which started to escalate during the early Stuart period.

In 1617 Julines Herring was persuaded to preach by William Rowley, and the following year the Drapers Company agreed to let Herring, 'preacher of St Alkmunds' use their hall for a £4 yearly rent.[172] The movement for godly preaching began within the Drapers Company, for not only was Rowley a convert but John Niccolls and Richard Hunt, both former town bailiffs, also promoted the cause. Niccolls and Hunt were the brothers-in-law of Rowland Heylyn, a former Shrewsbury man who was a patron of Puritan preachers, and funded a lectureship for St Alkmund's.[173] The Heylyns were an old Shropshire family, who apparently had owned most of Maesbrook in the Middle Ages.[174] Rowland was master of the Ironmongers Company and was made both an alderman and sheriff of London.[175] Herring was a popular and pious preacher, originally from Montgomeryshire. He had been initially educated in Shropshire, before moving to Coventry where his father was a bailiff and sheriff.[176] Forced out as a preacher at Calke Abbey in Derbyshire for non-conformity, he came to Shrewsbury and preached every

[168] *Ibid,* p.278.
[169] George W Fisher, *The Annals of Shrewsbury School* (London: Methuen and Co.,1899), p.108.
[170] *Ibid.*, p.105.
[171] Hugh Owen, *Some Account of the Ancient and Present State of Shrewsbury* (Shrewsbury, 1808), pp.220-221.
[172] *HoS*, Volume II, p.279.
[173] *Ibid.*
[174] Ruscoe, *Landed Estates* Volume 8, *Ruyton and Knockin,* p.17.
[175] *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* entry by A.H. Dodd, with corrections by Peter Bartrum.
[176] *ODNB*, entry by Jacqueline Eales.

Tuesday and Sunday at one o'clock, but he also sermonised in the private homes of Edward Jones, George Wright and William Rowley.[177]

The Puritan movement flourished in the county, due to the tolerant attitude of the new Bishop of Lichfield Thomas Morton. Yet at this time Arminianism as promoted by Archbishop Laud was also popular. This high church, almost Catholic, style of worship placed greater emphasis on the use of the sacraments and old traditions rather than theology, and Laud was more than content to use the Church Courts to enforce his policies.[178] Laud was not overwhelmingly popular throughout the country, being seen as one of the King's 'Evill councellors,' but some welcomed his ordinances, and most ministries seemed to comply with them to a certain degree.[179] Watts revealed a pattern of conformity in north Shropshire, but the evidence available was sparse, and she accepted that the true picture could never emerge. Whitchurch seemed enthused by Laud's policies, and spent fairly substantial amounts on communion cups (£8 11s 6d), surplices, communion rails and mats.[180] This was not the only parish that expended large amounts of money on new church furniture, as Holy Cross also purchased a new communion cup for £7 18s.[181] Others such as Worfield, Cound, Shawbury and St Julian's purchased kneeling mats and cloth for surplices.[182] In 1634, parishioners in Uffington were charged a 20 pence in the pound lewn, some of which went towards the painting of the church, the erection of a communion rail and a new cover for the pulpit.[183] Not all parishes complied, however, although as Watts pointed out there could well have been a financial rather than theological reasons behind the lapses. The visitations also note numerous personal citations of ministers failing to wear the surplice, not administering the sacraments in the form required, failing to preach or catechise properly, or failing to

[177] Samuel Clarke, *A General Martyrologie* (London, 1651), pp.462-464.
[178] G.E. Aylmer, *The Struggle for the Constitution*, 1603-1689 (London: Blandford Press, 1963), pp.87-89.
[179] Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, ed. Harold Child (London: Keegan and Paul Ltd., 1904), p.98.
[180] SA: P303/B/1/1/2, and Watts, 'Impact of Laudianism,' pp.26-27.
[181] SA: P250/C/1/1. a
[182]Watts, 'Impact of Laudianism,' p.26. SA: P314/B/2/1 and 4-5 (Worfield), SA: P83/B/1/1 (Cound), SA: P241/B/1/1/1 (Shawbury), SA: P256/B/2/1/1 (St Julian's).
**[183]** W.D.G. Fletcher, 'The Churchwarden Accounts of Uffington Parish, 1627 to 1693,' *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume XII (1900), pp.357-368, (p.358).

go on perambulation.[184] In 1626, Hugh Gittins objected that the minister of St Giles's in Shrewsbury 'entertayne others to drink, dine and carde in tyme of divyne festives upon the Sabbath Days.'[185] There were also many instances where there were no communion rails, books of homilies or proper utensils with which properly to observe daily worship, The visitation of 1635 found numerous churches without rails around the communion table, Adderley had no flagon to serve the communion wine, whilst in other areas such as Atcham, Uffington and Quatford the fabric of the building itself needed repair. There were also seemingly great problems in both Nestrange and Nestrange Parva (Great Ness and Little Ness), where twenty-eight parishioners had not paid their lewns, the clerk had not been paid, and the church and churchyard were in disarray.[186]

It was the Arminian practices of Peter Studley, the vicar of St Julian's and St Chad's, that really fanned the flames between the godly worshippers, and those who were happy to follow a more elaborate style of worship. Studley's predecessor at St Chad's, Thomas Price, was known to have hated any popish practices, but Studley embraced the changes wholeheartedly and, in the process, alienated some of his congregation.[187] A visitation from the bishop in 1626 gave Studley the opportunity publicly to denounce two of his parishioners, George Wright and William Rowley, for the fact that they 'do admitt the people of divers families into their howses to heare the sermons, speeches, to sing psalms and prayer most Sonday-Night in the yeare.' He also reported the wives of Wright, Daniel Chidlowe (Chidley), Robert Groome, William Phillips, John Warren, Laban Sheppard and John Little, for refusing to be churched.[188] Some parishioners complained about Studley's own behaviour, alleging that he did not read prayers or catechisms, leading them to seek out other preachers, namely Herring.[189] There was an assumption that Studley, in retaliation, reported Herring to Bishop Morton for non-conformity, who then had no option

[184] LRO: B/V/1/48 – St Julian's, B/V/1/55 – Ellesmere, both unfoliated. LRO: B/V/1/48 – Myddle, and B/V/1/60 – Morton Corbet, both unfoliated.
[185] LRO: BV/1/48.
[186] H.D.G. Foxall, *A Gazeteer of Streets, Roads and Place Names in Shropshire* (Shropshire County Council, 1967), unpaginated. LRO: B/V/1/55 unfoliated.
[187] Barbara Coulton, *Regime and Religion. Shrewsbury 1400-1700* (Almeley: Logaston Press, 2010), pp.77-78.
[188] LRO: B/V/1/48.
[189] Barbara Coulton, 'Rivalry and Religion. The Borough of Shrewsbury in the Early Stuart Period', *Midland History*, 28, No 1 (2003), pp.28-50, (pp.34).

but to investigate the matter.[190] Yet, despite Morton and others being assured of his conformity, Herring was put under several periods of suspension, mainly due to Studley's interference. Studley reported many congregants including Humphrey Mackworth, Thomas Hunt, Edward Owen, Thomas Higgins, John Clarke, Owen George, Thomas Hudson, William Rowley and George Wright and their families for 'not bowing at the name of Jesus.'[191] George and Judith Wright and Owen George later appeared before the Court of High Commission between 1634 and 1636, until Bishop Wright deemed them to be conformable.[192] Yet Studley still had many supporters including those who had influence in town affairs such as Sir William Owen of Condover, Robert Betton, to whom he had been apprenticed before going into the church, and his brother John who was then an alderman. He was also encouraged by a change of bishop, from the more conciliatory Morton, to a supporter of Laud, Robert Wright, who discouraged any Puritan style of worship. Studley had the support of Laud, but was bitter at the popularity of Herring. His hatred of Puritanism was outlined in full in his work *The Looking glasse of Schisme*, which, in a poorly-disguised attempt to explain the murderous actions of Enoch ap Evan in Clun, developed into a rant against all those who did not follow what he saw as proper church practices.[193] Ap Evan, who was obviously mentally disturbed, killed both his brother and mother with an axe in 1633. He was later tried at Shrewsbury Assizes and hanged for his crimes, but, prior to his execution, Studley visited him in prison, and developed the resulting 'confession' into a diatribe about the effects of Puritanism. Studley blamed the murder on the fact that ap Evan's brother, John, and mother Joan, took communion kneeling, which they believed was the proper conformist way to worship, whereas Enoch insisted that bowing from the waist in a more godly manner was more appropriate.[194] This was despite Evans initially admitting at trial that the 'the devil being strong with him at that instant tempted him to do this heinous crime.'[195] Studley's commentary on the case was soundly refuted by Richard More, in the preface to the second edition of a *true relation of the Murders committed in the Parish of Clunne*, copies of which

[190] Clarke, *Martyrologie*, pp.264-65.
[191] LRO: B/V/1/53 unfoliated.
[192] *CSPD*, Charles I, 1634-5, pp.51,108,111,118,125,267,318,323,536.
[193] Peter Studley, *The Looking-glasse of Schisme* (London, 1635). See also Peter Lake, 'Puritanism, Arminianism and a Shropshire Axe Murderer', *Midland History*, 15 (1990), pp.37-64.
[194] *Ibid.*, pp.37-38.
[195] *CSPD*, Charles I,1634-35, pp.133,166.

were sent both to the bishops of Hereford and Lichfield and Coventry. More informed his readers that Studley had portrayed non-conformists as being disloyal to the King, and that 'the angry Author by his false glasse laboured to present that Nonconformitie to be the onely cause.'[196]

Even though Richard Baxter described meeting 'zealous godly Nonconformists in Shrewsbury,'[197] Laud had made it clear that he wanted to 'pickle up that Herring of Shrewsbury,' and by 1635 the preacher had left the town for the English church in Amsterdam.[198] In 1636, Studley resigned his Shrewsbury living, having accepted a living at Pontesbury, the home parish of Sir William Owen. He was replaced by the corporation's candidate, Richard Poole, even though St Chad's was also supposedly a royal Peculiar, therefore the choice of minister should have been the Kings alone, and their actions led to further disharmony between Laud and the corporation which would boil over into the case that was brought against the Archbishop in later years.[199]

In February 1635, Archbishop Laud ordered his Vicar General, Nathaniel Brent, to undertake visitations throughout the country.[200] Brent visited Shropshire in May of that year, where he was welcomed by 'the great persons of this county', and found that although there were some oversights in Shrewsbury, the clergy would happily correct them. He was, however, suspicious about Madstar, and he suspended him for marrying a couple outside of canonical hours. Laud was particularly concerned about the Shrewsbury parish of St Mary's, which was a Royal Peculiar. He voiced his suspicions to the Attorney General, Sir John Banks, indicating that he believed that the corporation was trying to gain control over the parish, as part of its petition for a new town charter.[201] St Mary's had already refused to co-operate with Brent's visitation, as it would only 'submit only to the King's jurisdiction.' Brent went ahead with his task, despite this, and found the preacher Dr Botton [Betton] conformed to all

[196] Richard More, *a true relation of the Murders committed in the Parish of Clunne* (1641), p.4.
[197] Sylvester, *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (London, 1696), p.13.
[198] Clarke, *Martyrologie*, p.466.
[199] *HoS*, Volume II, p.215. Coulton, *Regime and Religion*, p.88.
[200] *Ibid.*, p.471.
[201] *Ibid.*, pp.86-87 and Coulton, *Rivalry and Religion*, p.37. BodL: Bankes MSS:64/8.

current practices.[202] Yet this dispute over the status of St Mary's was not new; a similar situation had arisen with Bishop Morton in 1619, who tried to bring the curate under his jurisdiction, only to be rebuffed by the corporation on the grounds of its status as a Royal Peculiar.[203] In fact, during the latter half of the 1630s, the parish had expended considerable amounts of money on gilding and painting, erecting gates for the communion table, and seating for the aldermen, as well as buying a new rest for the mayor's sword.[204]

The religious picture of Shropshire during this period is not clear cut. It is obvious that in Shrewsbury there was a growing movement of godly Puritanism, more so than in neighbouring Herefordshire.[205] It was mainly through the actions of the Puritan-minded drapers that public preachers such as Herring were encouraged to visit. On the other hand, although there was much opposition to Studley's style of worship from some parishioners, there was evidence that some pockets of the county still appreciated the old traditions with all their trappings. For example, the parishioners of Berrington petitioned Bishop Wright in 1629 asking that the traditional dedicatory and celebratory Love Feast at Easter be reinstated, presumably having been stopped in the past for perhaps being too festive and not holy enough. The parishioners had the support of the local landowner, Sir Richard Lee, and Wright agreed that the Feast could be held once more, so long as it was not inside the church itself.[206] In 1637, there was a similar petition to Archbishop Laud from the parishioners of Clungunford, who had also enjoyed a similar celebration, and which included a dole of bread and cheese to those in need by way of poor relief. For the past fifty years, this had been held at the parsonage house rather than in the church, with the bishop's approval up until 1636, when the minister Samuel Barkeley had stopped it completely. Laud reinstated the custom, but only on the basis that it was not held within the church, seemingly for the poor relief alone.[207]

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[202] *CSPD*, Charles I, 1635, introduction, p.36.
[203] *HoS*, Volume II, p.365.
[204] *HoS*, Volume II, p.368.
[205] G. E. Aylmer, 'Who was ruling Herefordshire 1645-1661?', *Woolhope Transactions*, XL (1972), pp.373-387, (p.375).
[206] A Thursby-Pelham, 'The Berrington Love Feast', *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VII (1895), pp.203-206.
[207] *CSPD*, Charles I, 1637, pp. xxxi-xxxii.

So far as the evidence survives, the parishes of Shropshire appear to have complied with the directions of the bishop as far as they were able, given their finances. Yet in Bridgnorth, the parishioners were openly hostile to the paying of lewns to support the church, which Watts surmised was in reaction to Madstar's puritanical style of preaching, but it could well have been due to lack of money, particularly given the picture painted by Baxter of an uninterested congregation in a town without any real industry and a surfeit of alehouses.[208] In Shrewsbury, arguments and recriminations could not be solely attributed to differences in religion; in the 1630s, the town was full of divisions, particularly between the corporation officials, which seemed to spill over into religious matters. Similarly, Studley's dislike of Herring was not only due to the latter's Puritanism, but also attributable to his popularity and his ability to gain a good income from his preaching.

The growth of Puritanism, particularly amongst the merchant and professional classes, would shape many men's allegiance during the conflict. Recusancy was not a problem in the county, but several gentry families, such as the Sandfords, Brookes and Giffords, were Catholic.[209] There were few prosecutions within the county, as, in the main, Catholics were tolerated, some even being appointed to the Commission of the Peace until the purge of the membership by Charles I in 1625.Within the county, twenty-two justices were dismissed, mostly for their religious beliefs, and these included Sir Charles Foxe, Thomas Ireland, Richard Lee and Sir Francis Lacon.[210] Although there was not a large population of Catholics within the county, they were of vital financial assistance to the King in the early stages of the war, when, encouraged by Clarendon, they paid their recusancy fines before the due date and in one lump sum.

[208] Watts, 'Impact of Laudianism', p.36.
[209] SA:465/700.
[210] *VCH,* Volume III, p.91.

# County Administration

Shropshire was administered in accordance with Tudor and Stuart policies, which, at a local level, relied entirely on the goodwill and co-operation of local gentlemen, whose only real reward for service was the prestige that it garnered amongst their peers. Almost all local issues were dealt with by the Commission of the Peace, the 'effective voice of the county,' which was issued regularly by the crown under the great seal, under which the justices implemented not only national policies, but dealt with the minutiae of county affairs, as well as being able to voice their concerns over issues that worried them.[211] Yet this did not stop the purging or 'packing' of the commissions by both the crown, and, to a lesser extent, Parliament from the accession of Charles I through to the restoration. Charles started appointing suitable gentlemen, whom he believed would support him in a crisis from the early 1630s, and in Shropshire after Parliament's forces had taken control of the county, only their followers were appointed to the myriad of commissions. The Commission of the Peace was all-encompassing, so far as the administration of local affairs was concerned, on both a political and social level. To become a justice of the peace one had to be nominated as being suitable by the lord chancellor, who usually took the advice of other local dignitaries to ascertain suitability. The commission itself had four levels of hierarchy. The uppermost two tiers consisted of those closest to central affairs, such as the Lord chancellor or treasurer followed by the justices of assize and serjeants at law. The first group had nothing to do with local issues, whereas the second were the conduit from the counties to Westminster through the judicial process. On the next level were the real elites of the county such as the lord lieutenant or county peers. Lastly there were local gentry headed by the chief justice, the *custos rotuloram*, who also appointed the clerk of the peace.[212] Since the reign of Elizabeth I the role and workload of the JPs had increased dramatically, which in turn meant a large increase in the size of the local benches. The justices met as a formal bench four times a year at the Quarter Sessions. Each

[211] L.M. Hill, 'County Government in Caroline England 1625-40', pp.66-90, (p.67), in Conrad Russell, ed., *The Origins of the English Civil War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1973).
[212] *Ibid.*, pp.67-68.

member had to take an oath, to treat all that came before them equally, and not to deal with cases involving people known to them. They had to ensure that all financial penalties went straight to the Exchequer, and their warrants could only be executed by the local bailiffs or other appointed officer. Finally, they were not to receive any reward from their duties except the fees allowed by statute or the crown, and they had to keep to their sessions as had been set by Henry II.[213]

How integral the justices were to local government is illustrated by the fact that their role had eclipsed that of the sheriff by the late sixteenth century, whose powers had been reduced due to the fear of possible rebellion against the crown. By the early modern period, it was an appointment that no-one really wanted, as there was great expense involved, with the only reward being an element of prestige. The sheriff could not leave the county during his tenure, except with the monarch's express permission, meaning that he could not stand for Parliament; he had to entertain the assize judges and collect the crown's local revenues, as well as meting out punishments and collecting unpopular taxes such as ship money.[214]

The Commission of the Peace could not function without the work carried out by the lesser officials from the county hundreds and parishes, who, by way of accounts and presentments from their localities, kept the administration going. Shropshire was made up of fifteen hundreds: Shrewsbury, Bradford North, Pimhill, Bradford South, Brimstry, Wenlock, Condover, Oswestry, Ford, Chirbury, Clun, Purslow, Munslow, Overs and Stottesdon.[215] In the late sixteenth century it was separated into fixed divisions, because of the increased workload that the Quarter Sessions had to deal with. This was not a new development for the county, as it had become common practice by Henry VIII's reign for the Justices assigned to a hundred to handle extra issues such as the licensing of alehouses.[216] The hundreds were, of course, divided further into parishes, the smallest, yet in many ways the most important unit

[213] Henry II, 5, C 4. Michael Dalton, *The Countrey Justice containing the practices of the Justices of the Peace Out of their Sessions* (London, 1677), p.13.
[214] Hill, 'County Government', pp.72-73.
[215] Cox, *Magna Britannica*, p.603.
[216] *VCH*, Volume III, p.73.

of governance, as it was the bedrock upon which the financial and legal framework of the county survived. Although the major local decisions were administered through the Commission of the Peace, it was the parishioners who paid their lewns, maintained their part of the county's infrastructure and supported the local poor, whilst ensuring that any misdemeanours be enforced through the weight of the law. The four parish officers were the churchwarden (many parishes had more than one), the constable, the overseer of the poor and the surveyor of the highways. In small parishes, the officials often doubled up on these roles, which were mandatory but unpaid, again the only reward being prestige. It was possible to delegate the role or pay a fine in lieu, but in Shropshire there is no direct evidence of these practices taking place.

In Shropshire, the taxes that were levied on each eligible parishioner to pay for repairs to the infrastructure or maintain the poor were called lewns, which were set at a fixed rate every year. Most of the money raised went to maintain the poor of the parish as was required by law. There were also regular parish payments made for the maintenance of maimed soldiers, contributions towards gaol delivery and the house of correction, as well as the relevant officers' (usually the constables') fees for delivering warrants and so on. The poor laws had been enacted during the last decade of Elizabeth's reign, and involved the distribution of the compulsorily-raised local taxes by the overseers who compiled lists of the deserving poor, allotted the necessary payments and ensured that the other parishioners paid their dues.[217] The poor law was the central tenet of Charles I's book of orders, issued in 1631 to regulate the work of the justices and other local officials throughout the country. Some justices took exception to this as they disliked the uniformity it demanded, although there is no evidence of dissention in Shropshire. The book was divided up into orders and directions dictating when Justices should meet, and what policies should be implemented. This, to the shires, was the centralised elimination of their independence; in fact, the book was trying to formalise many local policies that

[217] Geoffrey W. Oxley, *Poor Relief in England and Wales, 1601-1834* (Newton Abbott: David and Charles, 1974), pp.14-16.

were already in place, but it really failed to take off due to poor enforcement, and the speedy resolution of the subsistence crisis that had triggered it.[218]

To ally peoples' fears about a possible Catholic resurgence in the 1620s, Charles I purged the local commissions; in Shropshire, twenty-two members were removed between May 1625 and January 1626, but during the personal rule, Charles packed the commission with loyal men. In due course Parliament also forced the appointment of five of their own supporters, namely Thomas Mytton and Humphrey Mackworth, both of whom would not necessarily be regarded as suitable to be a JP, along with Sir John Corbet, Robert Corbet of Stanwardine and William Pierrepoint (son of the Earl of Kingston).[219] The Quarter Sessions for the county may have continued at least intermittently during the civil wars, Commonwealth and Protectorate, but the records are incomplete. It seems that each corporation held its own sessions proceedings, with no overlap of justices of the peace. The Assizes also continued within the county but how frequently is unclear; certainly there are references in both the Bridgnorth town book, the Ludlow bailiff's accounts for 1648, and the Shrewsbury Quarter Sessions papers to expenses occasioned during the Assizes, but the only real evidence of any court proceedings is the record of a single session in 1654 which is deposited at the National Archives, and brief references to sittings in 1657,1658 and 1660.[220]Also throughout the county Court Leets and Court Barons continued to be held in various manors, as well as Town Courts in the larger towns such as Ludlow, and the Curias Magna and Parva in Shrewsbury, but all these tribunals dealt with mainly land-based issues. In the smaller unincorporated towns such as Whitchurch, Wem, Wellington and Shifnal, who were all governed under the manorial system, the Town Court dealt with presentments for illegal ale selling and breaches of the Assize of Bread, as well as assaults and affray. Due to the increase of crime in the busy trading town of Whitchurch, the Lord Chancellor and Lord of the manor, Thomas Egerton, obtained a royal charter which gave the town bailiffs the power to enquire in to serious crimes such as murder, something that

[218] Fletcher, *Reform in the Provinces*, pp.58-60.
[219] TNA: C231/5, pp.156, 196,213,281,287,314,325,337,374-5,397,404,434,452,476,481,509,515,543, and *VCH* Volume III, pp.90-91.
[220] SA:BB/D1/2/1/60-61,67 and 69. SA:LB/8/1/168/3 – wine at The Cross and The Lion was paid for. TNA: ASSI/5/1/2. Offley Wakeman, *Quarter Sessions*, pp.3-9.

was not normally part of the Court Leet process. Watts believed that this was a significant measure so far as the legal status of the town was concerned.[221]

The social composition of the local bench in the county did not really change up until the mid-seventeenth century. During the reign of James I, it did include some with more radical views, but in the main it was made up of the local gentry families, many of whom were related through marriage and some of whom owed their position to royal approval. The county's lord lieutenant, up until 1642, was also the president of the Council in the Marches, and the sheriff was also a royal appointment until 1645. Those sheriffs who would not necessarily have gained such approval, William Pierrepoint (1637-38), and Thomas Nicolls (1640-41), were appointed on a purely conciliatory basis. Pierrepoint, who later went on to sit as MP for Nottinghamshire in the Convention Parliament, as the son of the Earl of Kingston, must have been thought suitable for the post in 1637, despite his later support for Parliament. The first parliamentarian choice for the office was Thomas Mytton in 1645.

So far as the work of the Commission of the Peace was concerned, divisional meetings were common in addition to the usual Quarter Sessions. There were monthly meetings over the maintenance of bridges – the county being responsible for Atcham, Buildwas, Tern and half of the Tenbury and Montford bridges – and roads. There were similar meetings for the licensing of alehouses, the management of which necessitated a bond. Such recognizances were heard at divisional meetings once a year; those in the Bradford hundred in the north of the county met at Brimstree in either April or May, there were September/October meetings for Stottesdon, and between October and January in Chirbury and Ford. The licences themselves were only valid for one year and had to be renewed at another annual divisional meeting; those for Purslow and Clun met at Purslow, Munslow at Munslow, Brimstree and Stottesdon at Bridgnorth, and Condover at Cound. Despite the supposed regulation put in place by the book of orders, the monthly divisional meetings continued until 1642.[222]

[221] Watts, 'Small Market Towns', pp.428-429.
[222] *VCH,* Volume III, pp.95,97,99,101,106,107.

To pay for the social responsibilities of the county there were four standing and five occasional rates which were imposed when necessary. The standing rates were for the relief of maimed soldiers, the gaol and the house of correction money, and finally the King's Bench and Marshalsea money for the relief of prisoners. The occasional rates were assessed by allotments, which were one hundred areas of the hundreds and liberties divided up into areas of relatively equal value. There were, however, arguments over the value of the allotments; for example, it was contended that the allotments of Purslow and Clun were not as valuable as the other areas and so the boundaries should be revised.[223] The most common of those rates being levied were for vagrancies and the repair of bridges.[224] Two of the most unpopular taxes/assessments, namely the muster master's fees and ship money, were based on the allotment system.

The ship money levy was one part of Charles I's personal rule that really alienated the shires. Imposed in the past on coastal counties in times of war or emergencies, it was rolled out during the mid-1630s to include inland counties as well. In 1635, the county of Shropshire had been ordered to pay £4,500 in ship money levies.[225] Shrewsbury had petitioned the Privy Council over the proportion it had to provide compared to the rest of the county. It had originally been levied at the rate of £500 per year, which was reduced to £450 upon the complaint that the other corporate towns had been assessed at £250 in total; for example, Much Wenlock's assessment, perhaps influenced by John Weld of nearby Willey, was initially only £30, but was increased upon Shrewsbury's complaint to £295. Weld subsequently petitioned the Privy Council about the new assessment, blaming the sheriff Robert Corbet for the increase in the town's assessment, as well as his own increased liabilities, which had resulted in some of his cattle being distrained by the local bailiff, Francis Haughton, in lieu of payment.[226] This was ironic as during the civil war, Weld was a great supporter of the King, whereas Robert Corbet of

[223] Offley Wakeman, *Abstract of the Orders of the Quarter Sessions for Shropshire*, (Shrewsbury: Shropshire County Council, 1901), p.1.
[224] *Ibid.*, pp.100-103.
[225] *CSPD*, Charles I, 1635, p.480.
[226] *CSPD*, Charles 1, 1636-7, p.20.

Stanwardine, cousin of Sir John Corbet, was a supporter of Parliament. Sharpe and Kishlansky have both agreed that ship money was a lucrative and successful type of taxation.[227] Shropshire had a relatively good collection rate, but many people showed extreme reluctance, and/or were tardy in their payments. When Shrewsbury petitioned over its unfair assessment, the Privy Council was warned by the Under Sheriff, Robert Madocks, that any reduction would force a 'second assessment upon the whole county which will beget great trouble for the money imposed on the county is very hardly collected.'[228] In the following years collections were not so successful, as evidenced by the numerous missives from the sheriffs of the county and the Privy Council between 1636 and 1638 to the bailiffs of the town to collect the arrears due. All four sheriffs during that period, John Newton, William Pierrepoint, Roger Kynaston and Sir Paul Harris, encountered difficulties.[229] Langelüddecke carried out a study of county payments during the mid to late 1630s, and, from the figures available, found that the collection of the £4,500 that was due by April 1636, under the 1635 writ, was successful, albeit tardy, as £4,321 had been paid by July of that year. During John Newton's tenure as sheriff, £4,213 5s 6d had been collected by 1 April 1636, leaving the arrears to be sorted out by his successor Robert Corbet; on the face of it, it was a success, yet he had problems finding people to carry out the collections, until they were promised suitable remuneration, and, even upon returning £2,000 with the promise of another £1,500 within another few months, he was urged by the Privy Council to speed up the process, as 'the service will not bear delay.'[230] No payments can be found in 1637, but the assessment must have been met as in March 1638 the county was only £131 in arrears. Payments up until April 1639 meant that the 1637 assessment had been 96 percent satisfied, and a similar collection rate was seen for the reduced £1,650 assessment ordered in 1638 (although again it took eighteen months to collect 93.4 percent). The final writ of 1639 was never collected in full, with £4,387 remaining unpaid by the end of 1640.[231]

[227] Sharpe, *The Personal Rule,* p.585. Mark Kishlansky, *Monarchy Transformed: Britain, 1603–1714* (London: Penguin,1997), p.122.
[228] *CSPD,* Charles I, 1635, p.480.
[229] SA:SB/D/2/1/73 Bundle C.
[230] *CSPD,* Charles I, 1635, pp.348, 503. *CSPD,* Charles I, 1635-6, p.184.
[231] Henrik Langelüddecke, '"I finde all men & my officers all soe unwilling": The Collection of Ship Money, 1635–1640,' *Journal of British Studies,* 46, No. 3 (July 2007), pp.509-542.

So far as the muster master's fee was concerned, it was resented as an unnecessary burden on county resources. Muster masters had been appointed in each county from Elizabeth I's reign onwards, and were appointed by the lord lieutenant of the county. They were meant to be experienced professional soldiers who were appointed to ensure that the county militia was prepared for any forthcoming war, but many counties felt that the appointments were open to corruption. Shropshire had avoided such an appointment until 1632, when the lord lieutenant, the Earl of Bridgewater, appointed Edward Burton, on a salary of £50 per year. A presentment at the 1635 Easter sessions stated 'the Grand Jury being informed and of their own knowledge privy to the great repining of the county generally, because of the great and unnecessary charge of 50l to be paid annually to a muster-master, which is a needless office in that county, they therefore present the imposition of 50l. yearly, or any other sum, to that purpose, as a great grievance and oppression.'[232] During the course of the hearing Sir John Corbet had clashed with two of the other justices, Timothy Tourneur and Richard Newport, over the presentment, with the latter arguing that the jury should not bother themselves with such matters, whereas Corbet, backed by another justice, Francis Charlton, was adamant that they were only carrying out duties required of them and demanded that the Petition of Right be read out in public to underline his point.[233] Corbet and Charlton were also ordered to attend the Privy Council to explain their actions, and proceedings were brought before the Star Chamber. Corbet was imprisoned in the Fleet from 10 June 1635 until his release upon a £2,000 bond on 28 November of that year pending the outcome of the case.[234] Charlton was released after a couple of days, but Corbet, who denied the allegations put to him in court, also had his supporters, namely Sir Robert Vernon, Richard Lee, Walter Barker, Thomas Wolryche, Richard Lister, John Lloyd, Edward Littleton and Richard More, who privately wrote to the Earl urging him to end hostilities.[235]

[232] *CSPD:* Charles I, 1635, p.304.
[233] *Ibid.,* pp.274-275.
[234] *CSPD*, Charles I, 1635, pp.455, 507.
[235] Esther S. Cope, 'Politics without Parliament: The Dispute about Muster Masters' Fees in Shropshire in the 1630s', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 45, No.4 (autumn, 1982), pp.271-284, (p. 277).

In June 1635 Burton complained to the high chamberlain of Ludlow about his lack of salary for the past year, stating that it 'must be some mistake for I knowest that the King's constables of Munslow have paid it in so far as they did their rounds'. He demanded that the constables be ordered to carry out their duties and report back on anyone who 'doo wofule to pay' or else be answerable to the Earl of Bridgewater in person.[236] At that point only five out of the fifteen hundreds had made any payments, six had asked for time to pay, one was prevaricating and three had refused point blank to contribute to the fee. Even some of those close to the Earl of Bridgewater had expressed their hatred of the assessment.[237]Although Burton received his salary in full shortly afterwards, the county's dissatisfaction with the office came to the attention of the Privy Council, and several of the high constables, Richard Niccolls, Edward Tomkins, Andrew Bright, Rowland Clough, Francis Lloyd and Samuel Dager, were ordered to appear before it.[238] The constables argued that they had only made the presentment at the behest of other petitioners and constables, and Niccolls admitted to speaking to the Grand Jury about the matter, but only to ensure that the justices authorised no more fees until the last ones had been paid.[239] There is some evidence to suggest that the fee was not totally held in contempt, as Tomkins and Lloyd came from the Pimhill hundred which had made some payments.[240] Corbet did not forget the affront, however, and later petitioned the commons regarding his detention, and, on 4 June 1641, the commons declared that the £30 fee (in fact as already seen it was £50) imposed by the Earl was illegal as 'it is high Presumption, for a Subject to impose any Tax upon the Subject, and the Taking of it is an Extortion and against the Right of the Subject'. Furthermore, they decreed that Corbet was incarcerated under an illegal warrant and that the Earl along with others of the Star Chamber who had presided over his case should make reparations. There was, however, no order for the detention of the Earl, but the clerk of the peace at the time, Richard Harris, was sent for as a delinquent.[241] In August of that year Corbet applied to the House to impeach the Earl for false imprisonment.[242] Bridgewater was not seen

[236] SA:LB/7/930.
[237] Cope, 'Politics without Parliament', p.273.
[238] *Ibid.,* p.276.
[239] *CSPD,* Charles I, 1635, p.304.
[240] Cope, 'Politics without Parliament', p.283.
[241] *CJ,* Volume 2, p.167.
[242]*HJ,* Volume 4, p.383.

as a particularly effective lord lieutenant, or even lord president, mainly because he spent little time in the area, preferring life in the capital. It therefore came as no surprise that Parliament replaced him as lord lieutenant with Sir Edward Littleton in February 1642.[243] Littleton, however, defected to the King's court in York in spring of that year, so only held the position for a few months before being replaced by the parliamentarian Earl of Essex on 5 September.[244]

The Council in the Marches was another judicial machine within the county, although by the seventeenth century it had really lost its power. The Council was very similar to the Star Chamber in terms of its remit, as it dealt with both administrative and judicial matters, and was devised in order to take some of the burden off the Privy Council.[245] The origins of the court are unclear; believed to have been initially established by Edward IV to deal with inter-border disputes, of both a criminal and civil nature, it was properly established by Henry VII at the end of the fifteenth century.[246] At its head was the lord president, and the Council's remit included the defence of the counties under its jurisdiction which included not only the border counties, but some in Wales, and, on occasion, Warwickshire, along with arranging musters to defend the realm when required.[247] It was also a peripatetic body, for although it sat mainly in Ludlow, council meetings also took place in several other towns in its jurisdiction.[248] By the early seventeenth century the court was of little importance, and was included in the legislation that abolished the Star Chamber and the Council of the North.[249] Yet, it survived, but the sittings were infrequent. The few remaining case papers indicate that it certainly sat between 1642 and 1645, and again in 1681 and 1684.[250] It was seemingly only revived during the restoration period as a means of obtaining crown income for the sale of offices, before its final abolition in 1689.[251]

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[243] *CJ*, Volume 2, p.426.
[244] Edward Peacock, ed., *The Army Lists of the Roundheads and Cavaliers* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1874), p.3. *CJ*, Volume 2, p.752.
[245] Baker, *Introduction to English Legal History*, pp.139-140. Stat. 34 and 35 Hen. 8, c.26.
[246] Caroline Skeel, *The Council in the Marches of Wales; a study in local government during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (London: H. Rees, 1904), pp.18-20.
[247] *Ibid.*, p.252.
[248] *Ibid.*, p.180.
[249] 17 Car.1, c.10 – An Act for regulating the Privy Council and for taking away the court commonly called the Star Chamber.
[250] SA:LB/14/723-725.
[251] Skeel, *The Council in the Marches*, pp.166,179.

The governing bodies of the various towns have already been assessed and from the remaining archival evidence most seem to have run harmoniously apart from Shrewsbury, where it appeared that there was a large degree of factionalism within the town council, over matters of religion, education and general administration of town affairs. It was the last matter that prompted the decision to apply for a new town charter in the late 1630s. as they required what Thomas Niccolls described as 'uniformity of government,' to prevent the factionalism that occurred every year at election time, which was on the Friday after Michaelmas. Then, a convocation of twenty-five burgesses met to elect the two bailiffs for the next year, but some drew out the proceedings simply to take advantage of the entertainment on offer, whilst others saw it as an opportunity to settle old scores. Even when the two bailiffs were elected they very rarely agreed with each other. The application took longer than usual because Archbishop Laud had issued *Quo Warranto* proceedings against the corporation, alleging that it was showing disloyalty to the crown by trying to appoint its own clergymen. Laud's writ was opposed by the corporation, but it was a costly process, as the defence of 'the right of the curratt place of St Chad's,' cost them over £162 just to issue the necessary bills in the case.[252] On 6 June 1637, Thomas Niccolls petitioned the King for a stay in proceedings, so that the corporation could become 'suitors for such a new grant with confirmation of all their ancient privileges as the Council sees fit.' The King agreed, and the election of the bailiffs was also put back until the matter was resolved.[253] Eventually a new charter was granted replacing the two bailiffs with a single mayor, who, despite the specification that it should be the most senior alderman, turned out to be Thomas Jones, 'a man of 30,000l or 40,000l estate' who had agreed to make a substantial donation towards the rebuilding of St Paul's Cathedral, and would encourage his friends to be similarly generous.[254] Yet divisions within the corporation persisted, often due to differences in religion, which then spilled over into personal feuds; for example Niccolls was of the Puritan faith, whereas his main protagonist, the town clerk Thomas Owen, was not.

[252] SA:3365/581/7 and 3365/582/56.
[253] *CSPD,* Charles I, 1637, p.194, and TNA: SP16/366 fo.48 and SP16/500/7,13.
[254] *CSPD,* Charles I, 1637, p.306.

This evaluation of Shropshire from the Middle Ages onwards shows a county with unswerving loyalty to the crown, which was an important factor for Charles I and his followers during the civil wars. Once an extremely important defensive buffer between the English and the Welsh, the county's importance to the crown had declined, but had not been forgotten. The privileges bestowed upon the towns by way of various charters had allowed the county to flourish and its populace to prosper. So, as will be seen, when Charles I raised his standard at Nottingham in 1642, his first venture out into the country to garner support sent him West. The county would remain a royalist stronghold for most the war, yet in the decade beforehand certain pockets of the populace had revealed an independent streak, and had proved themselves as not being scared publicly to raise certain issues. It was a county overseen by both established gentry families, but also senior merchants and lawyers, which perhaps led to a more even-handed approach to governance, particularly as many of the latter followed the Puritan faith. Shropshire was never going to conform to Everitt's county community theory; its society was more socially inclusive, trade more open, and, despite its remoteness, it was seemingly far more cosmopolitan than Everitt's Kent in the south.

# Chapter 2

## Administration and Events during the first Civil War.

### The Coming of War

We do with all thankfulness and unanimously acknowledge ourselves sensible of the good lawes which through his majesties goodness hath be enacted this Parliament. And wee doe much reioyce in his ma'ties pious and tender care expressed by his ma'ties declaracons and expressions in print. And lastly by his highnes letter read unto us publickly this Assizes in open court to defend and mayntayne the true protestant religion by the lawe established against Popish Recuscants Anabaptists and other Separatists. And that the lawes of the land be the rule of his majesties' Parliament whereby the subjects liberty and Property is defended And that his maietie will preserve the freedome and privileges of Parliament with all which expressions we were abundantly satisfied That wee doe not in any way distrust his maiesties constancy in these resolucons And that wee doe declare that we will be ready to attend and obey his maiestie in all lawfull ways ffor the putting of the Countrey in a posture of Armes for the defence of his maiestie and the peace of the Kingdome.[1]

[1] Anon, *the declaration and protestation agreed upon by the Grand Jurie at the assizes held for the county of Salop the eighth day of August 1642* (London, 1642).

This outspokenly pro-royalist declaration of the Shropshire Grand Jury, presented by the Sheriff John Weld, Sir William Whitmore and Timothy Tourneur, the recorder of Shrewsbury, on 8 August 1642, brooked no doubt as to where the county's loyalty lay; or at least it was the position of a group of selected freeholders. There was neither prevarication nor neutralism in the declaration, and it followed the stance taken by the Grand Jury in Worcestershire, rather than following the prevailing, more neutralist, mood in neighbouring Cheshire. The number of names appended to the declaration was at least one hundred (twelve of whom were illiterate). Few of the landed gentry sat on the Grand Jury that day, but whether that was a deliberate decision or not is debateable. The most notable jurors were Sir Paul Harris, Sir Thomas Wolryche, Sir Vincent Corbet and Sir William Owen, and there were also ten esquires on the jury, Francis Ottley, Thomas Eyton, Thomas Scriven, Edward Cressett, Walter Piggot, Roger Kynaston, Francis Thornes, Richard Lloyd, Edward Baldwin, Francis Billingsley, and Edward Stanley, most of whom will appear later in this work linked to the royalist cause. Other jurors included the Escheator for the county, Edward Dod, and the high constable, William Blackerlay, with the rest almost certainly being the wealthier yeomen and merchants of the county. Some of the participants were inter-related. Sir William Whitmore of Apley, who was sheriff of the county in 1620, was Weld's son-in-law; Sir Thomas Wolryche of Dudmaston, former MP for Much Wenlock, and later appointed by Charles I to the governorship of Bridgnorth, was linked to the Ottleys through marriage; and Sir William Owen of Condover, bailiff of Shrewsbury in 1621 and sheriff two years later, was allied to the Needhams through marriage.[2]

Grand Jurors played an important part in any judicial process, as a case could only proceed fully before the court if the jurors had first accepted the presentment of the crime and marked it as a *verra billet* (true bill). The jury were, overall, summonsed from the ranks of the lesser gentry, or the 'middling freeholders.'[3] It was also generally accepted that the views of the Grand Jury were those of the county. Yet in Shropshire there was a suspicion that the August declaration had been made by a 'packt Grand

[2] J. & J.B. Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies of England* (London: Scott, Webster and Geary, 1888) pp.561,577-578. *HV*, Part II, p.388.
[3] John Morrill, *The Cheshire Grand Jury 1625-1659: A Social and Administrative Study* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1976), pp.3,6,19.

Jury' that had sat at Bridgnorth rather than Shrewsbury, as the Sheriff John Weld of nearby Willey had more influence in the area. It was the sheriff's duty to empanel suitable jurors from every hundred, and Parliament believed that Weld and Baron Henden, the presiding judge, had manipulated the proceedings, specifically choosing jurors they thought would support the crown.[4] The commons directed that both men be impeached for their collusion in the whole affair, and several MPs were ordered to investigate the conduct of judges on all circuits. William Pierrepoint and Sir John Corbet were two of those appointed, and Weld was also investigated for the alleged illegal detention of a parliamentarian sympathiser, Walter Barker, and the seizure of his goods.[5]

The signatures of several prominent county men on the declaration, some of whom would later become commissioners of Array, was unsurprising, but there were also some notable absences. The theory that Weld did summons the Assizes to be held at Bridgnorth, within his sphere of influence, for fear that if it was held in Shrewsbury different opinions might prevail, would be difficult to prove, but there is some evidence that a few of the jurors were known to each other. It would be near impossible, and involve a lot of guesswork, to establish from which hundreds all the jurors had come, but it is obvious that not all came from the Stottesdon, Brimstree and Wenlock hundreds that were immediate to Bridgnorth.

A brief survey of the archival evidence shows that many, such as Francis Garland, Thomas Blakway, whose family came from West Coppice, John Horton, Thomas Wellins, the Mullards, Thomas Bullock, Richard Hosier, and Roger Roe of Linley, seemed to come from the district covered by the Wenlock bailiff's court, so the likelihood is that they all lived in the Wenlock Hundred.[6] Some obviously did not. Richard Hoggins, who was later described as a gentleman, seemed to have had property at Betton Strange just outside Shrewsbury.[7] John James, Richard Farmer and Richard Horton were all later

[4] *Ibid.*, p.15. *Some Speciall Passages*, Number 3, 13-23 August 1642, p.23.
[5] *CJ*, Volume 2, 1640-1643, p.731. Parliamentary Archives: HL/PO/JO/10/4/7.
[6] SA: WB/F/2/2/19/8/9. SA:1514/113. SA: WB/F/2/2/22/3/27. SA:WB/F/2/2/19/8/19. SA: WB/F/2/2/43/4/2. SA:WB/F/2/2/19/8/4. SA:WB/F/2/2/44/10/7. SA:WB/F/2/2/21/1/12.
[7] SA:49/422.

documented as possible Grand jurors from the parish of Caynham, near Ludlow.[8] There are various Thomas Latewards in the county, but the one named as juror was probably a yeoman from Berrington, who was also known to another juror, Thomas Eyton, and the Recorder of the court, Timothy Tourneur, through land transactions.[9] Richard Meyre was another yeoman, also from Berrington, and could have been known to Lateward.[10] George Farmer came from Eaton Mascott near to Berrington, and was later accused of delinquency for being 'in arms' under Thomas Scriven at Whitchurch.[11] Francis Sandford was a captain and chief engineer under Lord Capel in 1643. Captured during the fall of Shrewsbury he was later imprisoned at Nantwich.[12] The origins and residences of most of the other jurors is now unrecoverable from the extant source material.

The absence of the Newports from the jury was surprising, particularly so far as Francis was concerned, as by that time he had been appointed a royalist commissioner of Array. Yet the family had kept remarkably quiet over the whole affair, and had seemingly not favoured any side. In April 1642, Francis, then MP for Shrewsbury, had written to his uncle, Sir Richard Leveson, seeming to suggest some parliamentarian sympathies.[13] Yet, the year before, he had refused to sign the Earl of Strafford's attainder.[14] His father also displayed some signs that he wanted to remain neutral. Even in the days before the King arrived at Shrewsbury, he was in correspondence with his brother-in-law Leveson, hoping that the latter would intervene with Lord Strange, soon to be Earl of Derby and local recruiter in both Cheshire and Shropshire, and assure him of his neutrality.[15] It is obvious that Newport was torn between sides, for at a militia meeting on 2 August, he initially seemed to support the parliamentarian Thomas Hunt, intervening during a fracas that ensued, but later the same day allegedly appeared with

[8] SA:LB/11/4/69/1.
[9] SA:1514/294.
[10] SA:1514/290.
[11] TNA: SP23/166/231.
[12] SA:465/697-8. *HoS*, Volume 1, p.456.
[13] STA: D868-3-16.
[14] Rushworth, Volume 4, p.249.
[15] STA: D868/3/2, also *HMC Fifth Report*, p.145. William Phillips, 'Sequestration Papers of Richard First Baron Newport and Sir Francis his Son' *TSANHS*, 2nd Series Volume XII (1900), pp.1-38, (pp. 3-4).

the colours of the leading royalist Francis Ottley in his hat.[16] By September, however, the Newports had declared themselves for the crown, presumably to the local royalist commissioners' great relief.

Shortly after the Grand Jury had spoken, some of the local clergy affirmed their loyalty to the crown via their own resolution.[17] Only seventeen signatures survive on the original document, namely Nicholas Page, rector of Wem, Laurence Seddon, rector of Worthen, William Ramsden, rector of Edgmond, Richard Awnsham, rector of Hopesay, James Fleetwood, vicar of Prees, Edmund Wolley, rector of Adderley, Gervais Needham, vicar of Bishop's Castle, Richard Waring, curate of Halston, Walter Williams, vicar of St Martins, John Arnway, archdeacon of Shropshire and parson of Hodnet, William Higgins, archdeacon of Derby and rector of Stoke, Humphrey Wynn, vicar of Oswestry, George Griffiths, rector of Llanymynech, Edward Willins, rector of Whittington, James Wilding, rector of Selattyn, John Price, rector of Knockin, and John Smalman, vicar of Kinnersley. However, it is hard to believe that they were the only ones in the county who shared this loyalty. What is interesting is that many of the signatories came from the north of the county, mainly the north-west close to the Welsh border, and presumably many of them knew each other as their parishes often adjoined.

Most were later dismissed from their livings during the Commonwealth; in fact, Page was ejected around the time that Wem was garrisoned for Parliament in August 1643.[18] James Wilding held onto his benefice, after signing the Solemn League and Covenant, until his death in March 1659.[19] Whether he achieved this through artifice or design is not clear; on the one hand he was not afraid to proclaim his loyalty to the King, whose death he later mourned in the Selattyn parish register, yet he was also a good friend of the Mytton family, having been Thomas Mytton's tutor, and later readily accepted the Commonwealth's position regarding the practising of religion.[20] John Price of Knockin was not

[16] *Ibid.*, p.5.
[17] Ottley Papers, *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VII (1895), pp.244-245.
[18] J.E. Auden, 'Ecclesiastical History of Shropshire during the Civil War Commonwealth and Restoration', *TSANHS*, 3rd Series, Volume VII (1907), pp.241-310, (p.262).
[19] *The Register of Selattyn* (London: Parish Register Society, 1906), pp.152-153.
[20] *Ibid.,* p.133. *Bye-Gones: Relating to Wales and the Border Counties*, 1874-5, p.3. Auden, 'Ecclesiastical History,' p.248. Mrs Bulkeley–Owen, 'Sellatyn: A History of the Parish,' *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VII (1895), pp.207-234, (pp. 228-9).

excluded, purely because he died in 1646, and nothing is known of the fate of Richard Waring of Halston, save for the fact that he was Thomas Mytton's personal chaplain during the conflict, so presumably conformed as required by the Commonwealth and Protectorate.[21] Whether Ramsden was actually ejected from his living is unclear, as he died 'during the rebellion' having been made a doctor of divinity for his loyalty to the crown. The date of death is unclear, but, as a result, his dependents were 'put barbarously outdoors', indicating that he was in post at the time of his demise.[22]

The whole issue of loyalty would never have even been considered the previous year, when there was no such thing as a royalist party or parliamentarian faction. Shropshire was no different from all the other shires whose ultimate loyalty was to the King; some of Charles's policies were disliked and unwelcome in the county, but there was no question of an all-out rebellion against them. Yet, the local populace was not totally acquiescent, and often showed a localism in its reactions to central government. We have already explored their discontent with some of Charles's policies during the Personal Rule, notably the imposition of ship money and the muster master's fee. Some of the county's MPs in the Long Parliament – Richard More for Bishop's Castle, William Pierrepoint (son of the Earl of Kingston) for Much Wenlock, William Spurstowe for Shrewsbury, and Sir John Corbet, MP for the shire – supported Parliament throughout the conflict and beyond, although More died in 1643, and Spurstowe in 1646. Yet, even though these men were the public face of the county before the war, their sympathies were not reflected by the allegiances shown by the towns or areas that they represented, all of which became loyal to the crown. The other members of Parliament – Sir Robert Howard for Bishop's Castle, Charles Baldwin and Ralph Goodwin for Ludlow, Thomas Littleton for Much Wenlock, Francis Newport for Shrewsbury, Thomas Whitmore and Edward Acton for Bridgnorth and the other MP for the shire, Sir Richard Lee – supported the monarchy, but the irony is that although their allegiances reflected those of their constituents, they were disbarred from Parliament due to their royalist

[21] Auden, 'Ecclesiastical History', p.249.
[22] *Ibid.*, p.255, but the *Shropshire Parish Register* for Edgmond suggests he was ejected on an unknown date.

sympathies. There were also divided loyalties at a more local level, which were particularly obvious in Shrewsbury from the outset of the war.

In the early summer of 1642, Charles did not have the backing of Parliament to enact new statutes and instead resorted to the medieval Commissions of Array, which authorised lords lieutenants of the county to muster resources in times of emergency to defend the land. Originating from the reign of Edward I they had fallen into disuse by the Elizabethan era, but had never been formally repealed. Under the Great Seal, the King started issuing the commissions in June 1642, which authorized local commissioners therein named 'to Array and Train Our People… and to find Arms for other Men… and to conduct them so Array'd… for the Opposition and Destruction of our Enemies in case of danger.'[23] Parliament, however, declared the commissions illegal, as they were being employed without their consent, and were 'against the Law and against the Liberty and Property of the Subject,' and declared that anyone involved in their execution were 'Disturbers of the Peace of the Kingdom, and Betrayers of the Liberty of the Subject.'[24] Charles was not deterred however and continued to issue the commissions as a response to what he and his supporters saw as the illegal militia ordinance which Parliament had enacted without royal assent. The commission for Shropshire was issued on 22 June, yet the county did not galvanise itself until over a month later, when, on 24 July, John Weld summoned his fellow commissioners to meet and attend to the business in hand.[25]

The original commissioners included not only county men such as the sheriff himself and other prominent gentlemen who had served on the Commission of the Peace, but also those close to the crown, and some of the great absentee landlords of the area. As Hutton, Wanklyn and Worton have found, the names of the commissioners must be gathered from various sources, both archival and printed (many from the Ottley papers). The most comprehensive list is to be found in the Finch Hatton manuscripts at the Northamptonshire Record Office, but even they are transcripts, so there is much reliance on the

[23] Rushworth, Volume IV (1659), pp.655-657.
[24] *CJ*, Volume 2, p.632.
[25] Ottley Papers, *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VI, (1894), pp.33-34. STA: D593/P/8/1/1.

accuracy of the original compiler.[26] There were twenty-eight original commissioners, headed by Prince Charles, Thomas Earl of Arundel and of Sussex, Robert Viscount Kilmorrey (also a commissioner for Cheshire), William Lord Craven, Edward Lord Herbert of Chirbury, and Thomas Howard, Knight of the Bath.[27] Also named was the ineffective Earl of Bridgewater, then lord lieutenant of the county, Sir Edward Littleton, Sir Richard Lee, Sir Thomas Wolryche, Sir Vincent Corbet, Sir Richard Leveson (who was also on the Staffordshire Commission of Array, having estates in both counties), Sir Arthur Mainwaring, Sir William Owen, Sir Francis Kynaston, Sir Sampson Eure, Sir Gilbert Cornewall, Richard Newport, Henry Vernon, Thomas Edwards, Thomas Scriven, Francis Charlton, Francis Ottley, Robert and Pelham Corbet, Andrew Lloyd, Somerset Foxe, and Sharington Talbot from Wiltshire, who had no obvious county links save for being related to the Earls of Shrewsbury.

Apart from Talbot, other mysterious appointments were that of Sampson Eure and to a certain extent Sir Arthur Mainwaring. Eure had been attorney general for the Council in the Marches, but his family estate was Gatley Park in Herefordshire, and in 1642 he was MP for Leominster.[28] He was also appointed as commissioner for Herefordshire, but apparently took little part in royalist activities in that county.[29] The Mainwaring family had long established roots in Ightfield near Whitchurch and Sir Arthur's grandfather had been both MP for, and high sheriff of, the county. His grandson had no such links, being elected as MP for Huntingdon in the 1620s, but he had been steward to Sir Thomas Egerton, as well as a member of both Prince Henry's and Prince Charles's households, during the reign of James I. The Earls of Arundel and Bridgewater, Viscount Kilmorrey, the Lords Herbert and Craven and Sir Thomas Howard, seem to have been more figureheads on the commission than anything else. They all were landholders within the county, but none took any real part in the day-to-day running of the county. Even the Earl of Bridgewater who was then the President of the Council in the Marches, and a substantial landholder in the north of the county, was not actually very involved in county affairs,

[26] Northamptonshire Records Office: Finch Hatton Mss. Ref: FH/N/C/0133 (unfoliated).
[27] J. Hall, ed., *Memorials of the Civil War in Cheshire and Adjacent Counties by Thomas Malbon of Nantwich, gent.* (Manchester: The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, XIX, 1889), p.34.
[28] *HoP*,1604-1629, Volume IV, pp.207-208.
[29] *ODNB*, entry by Stephen Roberts.

preferring to spend most of his time in the capital. Herbert feigned illness for most the war, retiring to the relative peace of the family seat of Powis castle.

The other local commissioners had been involved in county affairs before 1642. Sir William Owen of Condover had been involved with the corporation since the early 1620s, when he had become bailiff for the town. He was allied to the Needhams through his first marriage, he had held the post of sheriff and been MP for Shrewsbury between 1625 and 1628.[30] Francis Kynaston of Oteley was MP for the shire in 1621, and was the son-in-law of Sir Richard Lee, who had served as sheriff of the county.[31] Thomas Wolryche of Dudmaston was MP for Much Wenlock, a seat he held from 1621 until 1626, and was also captain of the local militia.[32] Francis Charlton of Apley Court, who died later in 1642, had been sheriff in 1626. Others were prominent local men who were interrelated through marriage, or were from cadet branches of the county families. Henry Vernon was a Hodnet man, and later a local MP, but his mother had been a Needham. Scriven of Frodesley had links with both the families of Bromley and Vincent Corbet through his two marriages; he was appointed governor of Whitchurch during the war, and was involved in the skirmish at Wem, later dying of his wounds.[33] Thomas Edwards was son of a former sheriff and JP, and the family estates were in Greet in the very south-east of the county, but he lived at the College in Shrewsbury, and would be appointed sheriff in 1644.[34] Pelham Corbet was from the Leigh branch of the extended county family. He resided at Albright Hussey just to the north of Shrewsbury, and garrisoned it for the King, but the soldiers there were disbursed early in the war, as it was too close to Wem and too small to defend itself.[35] The identity of Robert Corbet is unclear. He could have been the head of the Humphreston and Ynysymaengwyn branch of the family. Alternatively, it could be another relative, Robert Corbet of Stanwardine, who, by August 1642, had shown himself to be loyal to Parliament, and unfortunately the Finch Hatton manuscript is not clear on this point.

[30] *HoP*,1604-1629, Volume V, pp.574-575.
[31] *Ibid.*, and *HV*, Part II, p.299.
[32] *HoP*, 1604-1629 Volume VI, pp.834-836.
[33] *Ibid.*, pp.629-630. *HV*, Part II, p.435.
[34] *HV*, Part I, p.173.
[35] Augusta Brickdale Corbet, *The Family of Corbet. Its Life and Times*, Volume II, (London: St Catherine's Press, n. d), pp.191,322.

In a second list of commissioners, dated 18 July 1642, some of the original figures, namely Newport, Littleton, Cornewall, Eure, Foxe, Robert Corbet, Talbot and Lloyd, had been excluded, but were replaced by other, mainly local men, who presumably were thought to be more suitable in that they would be either more pro-active or more loyal. This is surprising so far as Somerset Foxe was concerned, as the Foxes were ardent royalists. Somerset junior became a colonel in the royalist army, and was Prince Rupert's private secretary, so his royalist credentials were impeccable. Again, the list is unclear, but presumably therefore it was Foxe the elder who was originally appointed and soon removed; if so he could well have been dropped due to ill health, as he died at the beginning of May 1643.[36] The absence of Sir Richard Newport on the second list was surprising, but not unexpected. Newport had great influence in the county, and the family had played an important part in county affairs, but, in the early summer of 1642, he was privately trying to advocate for peace. This was a blow to the crown, who had hoped that Newport's allegiance would have garnered more local support. His son Francis was presumably added to the commission as his father's replacement. Yet neither he nor his father were part of the August Grand Jury.

It was no surprise that, if the Robert Corbet referred to was from Stanwardine, he was dropped, as both he and Andrew Lloyd of Aston Hall near Oswestry later became colonels in the parliamentarian army (Lloyd was also appointed governor of Bridgnorth in April 1646).[37] If, however, the commissioner referred to was the Humphreston Corbet, who was a royalist, he could have been removed purely because he had moved to his Welsh property and therefore could not involve himself thoroughly in county affairs. Correspondence certainly showed him to be back at Ynysymaengwyn in March 1643.[38] Sir Gilbert Cornewall was also no longer a commissioner, probably due to doubts over his loyalty. He was appointed to the parliamentarian county committee in April 1643, but there was a suspicion that he had provided arms for Prince Rupert, and had allowed one of his residences, Stapleton castle, just across

[36] Henry T Weyman, 'Some account of the early history of the Foxe family', *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume XII (1900).
[37] *CJ*, Volume 4, p.526.
[38] *Ibid*., pp.316-317.

the border in Herefordshire, to be used as a royalist stronghold. Symonds described Sir Robert Harley of Brampton Bryan as a rebel, yet applied no such epithet to Cornewall.[39] Furthermore, Sir Gilbert continued to sit as a JP in royalist-held Worcestershire in 1642/3.[40] Later, probably in 1644, his signature appeared on a petition (alongside the likes of Weld, Harris, and Ottley) by the royalist Edward Cressett directed to 'your highness', asking that he (Cressett) be released from custody in exchange for the parliamentarian Samuel More.[41] Despite all of these indicators, Cornewall continued to be involved in the county committee, and his estates were not sequestered at the end of the war.

The newcomers, who swelled the ranks of the commission to thirty-three, were the active recruiter for the crown, Sir Paul Harris, son of Sir Thomas of Boreatton, Richard Herbert, Sir William Whitmore, Sir Robert Eyton, Henry Bromley, Francis Newport, Thomas Eyton, Edward Cressett, Thomas Edwards, Francis Thornes, Walter Waring, Thomas Owen, Richard Lloyd, and the current mayor of Shrewsbury, which at the time was John Studley, who was replaced by Robert Betton the following year. These, again, were generally local men much involved in county affairs, but some of the inclusions on the commission are a mystery. Harris, Bromley, Eyton, Cressett, Charlton, Thornes, and Cornewall had been appointed to the Commission of the Peace by Charles I in the 1630s and early 1640s in order to shore up his support within the county.[42] Harris had closer connections to the court, having purchased the office of surveyor of the ordnance in 1627, a position he later requested to resell due to financial constraints.[43] Whitmore was an extremely wealthy man, whose father had Shropshire roots, but had made his fortune as a London merchant, and bought Apley Park with some of the proceeds. Sir William dealt in the sale and leasing of crown lands, and invested in the East India Company, and he even lent money to James I. He owned many properties including Bridgnorth castle. He was sheriff in 1620, and sat as MP for Bridgnorth in the Parliaments of 1621 and 1624.[44]

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[39] *A & O,* Volume 1, p.126. C.E. Long, ed., *Diary of the Marches of the Royal Army during the Great Civil War kept by Richard Symonds* (London: Camden Society, 1859), p.203.
[40] John Willis Bund, ed., *Worcester County Records: Quarter Sessions Files*, Volume 1, 1591-1643 (Worcester: Worcestershire County Council, 1900), p. xxix.
[41] SA:5460/8/2/2.
[42] TNA:C231/5, pp.213,314,325,337,375,509,543.
[43] G.E. Aylmer, *The King's Servants* (London: Routledge Keegan & Paul, 1961), p.266.
[44] *Ibid.* SA:5586/1/1/1-2.

Many of these commissioners were also related to each other through marriage. Henry Bromley was married to Beatrice, Sir Richard Newport's daughter, Richard Herbert, MP for Montgomeryshire in 1640, was married to Mary, the daughter of the Earl of Bridgwater, and Francis Thornes of Shevlock was married to Beatrice the daughter of Sir Andrew Corbet, and sister of Vincent.[45] Sir Robert and Thomas Eyton were not related, Robert having estates at Pentre Maddock and Duddleston in the north-west corner of the county, whereas Thomas was part of the Eaton Upon Weald Moors family.[46] Thomas was not a mere bystander in the war; knighted in 1642, he became a colonel in the royalist army, and his house was a rendezvous point for Ottley and Francis Newport in August 1642. Furthermore, because of his loyalty, his estates were sequestered, and he had to compound in the sum of £976.[47] It is unclear why Walter Waring of Owlbury was included, as in 1642 he was a minor landholder and esquire from the south of the county, so his influence on others would have been minimal. It was only in the two decades that followed that he became a man of property and brokered successful marriage alliances with other local gentry families, namely the Oakeleys and the Charltons of Whitton Court.[48] Cressett of Upton Cressett was from an old Shropshire family, and was killed during the siege of Bridgnorth in 1646, and his son Francis became a treasurer and steward to Charles I during the war. Thomas Owen was the son of a Shrewsbury alderman, had served in various roles within the corporation, and was MP for Shrewsbury between 1624 and 1640.[49]

The identity of Richard Lloyd is unclear; he could either have been the former MP for Montgomeryshire and close associate of the Herberts of Chirbury, or the royalist colonel from Lwynnymaen, who was later appointed as governor of Oswestry.[50] He was almost certainly not the Sir Richard Lloyd of

[45] *HV*, Part I, pp. 73, 137. W.R. Williams, *The Parliamentary history of the principality of Wales from the earliest of times to the present day* (Brecon, 1895), p.143.
[46] *HV*, Part I, pp.180, 182.
[47] P.R. Newman, *The Old Service: Royalist Regimental Colonels and the Civil War, 1642-1646* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p.172. Ottley papers, *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VI (1894), p.36. TNA: SP23/199/15-28.
[48] Sir Bernard Burke, *Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain and Ireland*, Volume 1 (London,1848), pp.208, 250. SA:X7381/145/849.
[49] *HoP*,1604-1629, Volume V, pp.573-574.
[50] *HV*, Part II, p.331. *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*, entry by A.H. Dodd.

Wrexham who corresponded with Francis Ottley, as that gentleman was a commissioner of Array for North Wales, who later became governor of Holt castle.[51] In September, three other local men were added to the commission, Thomas Cotton, Edward Eyton and Thomas Baldwyn.[52] Thomas Cotton was the second son of Robert Cotton esquire of Combermere, and was married to Viscount Kilmorrey's daughter, but the origins of the other two are unclear.[53] Edward Eyton does not appear to have been directly related to either of the other two forenamed commissioners, but Thomas Baldwin could have been a member of a Munslow family, and the person described in the *Herald's Visitation* as being the parson of Ridnall.[54]

The 1642 appointees were not the only Shropshire commissioners of Array. Others were appointed over the course of the war. The names of some of these appointees can be gleaned from the Ottley correspondence and the papers of the Committee of Compounding. Those whose appointment can be confirmed are Richard Prince, a lawyer from Shrewsbury, and Lawrence Benthall of Benthall. Prince claimed that he was appointed as a commissioner without his knowledge or consent, but had signed warrants for the local trained bands as part of his duties; furthermore, because of his loyalty to Parliament, he had been incarcerated until he paid a ransom.[55] Benthall, a suspected Catholic (his wife was certainly of that faith), had coal workings on his estate at Benthall in the south-east of the county. His house was garrisoned for the King, as the coal was an extremely important resource that would be transported by the royalists down the nearby Severn. Benthall was appointed a commissioner by Prince Rupert, purely to raise money for the royalist cause, and, after the war was ordered to compound in the sum of £230 as a result.[56] Another confirmed commissioner was John Newton of Heightley, about whom not much is known, save for the fact that he was responsible for impressing men for the King's

[51] Ottley papers, *TSANHS*, 2nd series, Volume VI (1894), *ODNB*, entry by Lloyd Bowen.
[52] STA: D268/2/37.
[53] Sir Bernard Burke, *Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire,* Volume 30 (London, 1868), pp.247-248. *HV*, Part II, p.372.
[54] *HV*, Part I, p.24.
[55] TNA: SP23/197/320.
[56] TNA: SP23/176/681. SP23/3/50. Eliza Stackhouse Acton, *The Garrisons of Shropshire, 1642-1648,* (Shrewsbury, 1867), pp.28-29.

army.[57] Others whose position cannot really be clarified are Richard Oakeley, who was noted in his composition papers as being a commissioner who had raised a warrant for a troop of dragoons, but, as Wanklyn believed, he could have been appointed onto one of the commissions that dealt with matters purely in a particular hundred, rather than for the whole county. An example of this was seen in February 1645, when Ottley wrote to the unnamed commissioners of Munslow hundred, regarding the enlistment of further troops.[58] James Lacon, Lawrence Benthall's business partner, and Arthur Sandford could also have been appointed in similar circumstances. Both were present at a meeting of the commission appointed by Prince Rupert, in November 1644, along with the sheriff (Thomas Edwards), Francis Ottley, Sir Vincent Corbet, and Messrs Smith and Treves, when the collection of the rents of the Earl of Bridgwater was discussed. Lacon was not named as a commissioner in his sequestration proceedings, and Sandford had died in 1645, so their position cannot be clarified further.[59] None of these men came from the county elites, although both the Benthall and Prince families were well established in the county. Benthall's attraction as a commissioner would have been his access to vital fuel supplies, and Prince not only had social standing within Shrewsbury, but also was extremely wealthy.

Worton has attempted to list all the commissioners in his work, but conceded that some assumptions have been made, for, as Wanklyn also found, it is difficult to establish the exact details of the commissioners given the lack of archival evidence.[60] What is clear from those that can be positively identified is that most came from long-established, and generally wealthy, families. Many of the commissioners had served as county MPs, or had held positions within corporations. So far as geographical variations are concerned, there were very few from the north of the county and most were from the south and from Shrewsbury, but it would be dangerous to make a firm link between this and a perception that there was more support for Parliament in the north of the county than the south –

[57] TNA: SP23/176/164.
[58] TNA: SP/23/184/43-55. Malcolm Wanklyn, 'Landed Society and Allegiance in Cheshire and Shropshire in The First Civil War', (unpublished PhD thesis, the University of Manchester, 1976), p.251. Ottley Papers, *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VIII (1896), p.272.
[59] *Ibid*., pp.254-255.
[60] Jonathan Worton, '*To Settle the Crown'. Waging Civil War in Shropshire 1642-1648* (Solihull: Helion and Company, 2016), pp.71-72.

especially because, as we will see, surprisingly few parliamentary commissioners came from the northern parts of the county. As to why there was such an absence can only be supposed at. It could have been because the Earl of Bridgewater who held vast estates in that area was an absentee landlord, therefore there was not perhaps the impetus from those who were his tenants to become involved in the conflict, but the contra-argument was that the Earl of Craven in the south also took little or no part in county life. Perhaps another explanation was that there were few large settlements and certainly no corporations in the north, and as many of the commissioners on both sides had been involved in either central or local politics, perhaps those men in the north who would have been suitable to play a part were either over-looked or did not have sufficient family, social or business connections to be invited to join the various committees or commissions. One thing that will become clear during this work is that the commission was more insular and less socially exclusive than their counterparts who sat on the various committees during forthcoming years. One thing that will become clear during this work is that the commission was more insular and less socially exclusive than their counterparts who sat on the various committees during forthcoming years.

The commission was co-ordinated and organised by Francis Ottley, who was a large landowner in the county, albeit one without a title. Although the Ottley Papers may give a skewed view of his role in the commission, since they are the only remaining detailed account of events during that time, Ottley appeared to be the conduit through which all parties corresponded, and was certainly at the forefront of the royalist effort to maintain control over the county. In Shropshire, the structure of the commission did not change in substance for the duration of the war, despite limited changes in personnel. In other Marcher counties such as Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, the organisations were revamped, and made more accountable, so they would be more efficient in overseeing local defence. According to Hutton this made them more successful, and he also argued that Shropshire was too large an area for a local committee to organise, harking slightly back to Everitt's premise that many of the gentry did not even look beyond the boundaries of their own parish.[61] This is a valid point, for, as will be seen, the

[61] Ronald Hutton, *The Royalist War Effort, 1642-1646* (Harlow: Longman, 1982), pp.37-38,87.

efforts of the commission generally amounted to little, apart from in the first flush of enthusiastic support for the King. On the other hand, account must be taken of the fact that the commissioners had a large area to cover, and that, combined with the topography, poor transport links of the county, and often lukewarm support for the crown, meant that they faced insuperable difficulties.

Parliament dealt with local issues and finances by way of the county committee system. Initially it relied on voluntary contributions to fund the war, which at the outset were generous, as there was a flush of enthusiasm like that experienced by the local royalists. It soon became apparent, however, that this was never going to be a reliable long-term system of finance, and so Parliament imposed a system of compulsory taxation. Taxes and contributions were collected at a local level by collectors appointed by the county committee. The other role played by the committee was to ensure that any parliamentary ordinances were enacted properly, and so, to a large extent, they were mirroring the commissions of Array. In general, however, some historians suggest they tended to be the more efficient out of the two; whether that was because of the personalities involved, or because the parliamentary system was more regimented is not clear.

Morrill certainly believed that the more ruthless parliamentary organisation was the key to victory in the war, but Hughes argued that his theory did not gel with the idea of county localism, as it would imply an acceptance of central control, contrary to Everitt's theory that local elites resented outside interference and ultimately did not cooperate. She posited that the key to Parliament's success was its ability to work with the local committees in a flexible manner, addressing any concerns they might have had, and so preventing any apathetic members defecting to the royalist camp. This is true to a certain extent in Shropshire where there were many differences amongst the members – for example, Thomas Mytton and his mentor the Earl of Denbigh had many disputes with the rest of the local committee – which had to be resolved by Parliament. However, these disputes did not seem to affect the overall efficiency of the committee. Hughes argued that royalism was a personal sentiment, which overrode any local issues, whereas one of Parliament's most important purposes, honed over the years, was to listen and react to local issues put forward by MPs. There was also a solid framework of courts and

appeal processes already in place to settle any disputes, which was not the case in the royalist camp. In a more sweeping statement Hughes argued that royalist commanders were often more dismissive of their local counterparts. In Shropshire, Prince Rupert, who was given overall control of the Marches in spring 1644, was more popular than his predecessor Capel, but he was often away from the area and so could not police all the disputes that arose. Hughes certainly had a point, however, as evidenced by comments made by Lord Byron, the governor of Chester; he described Shrewsbury as 'a garrison of burgesses' who would easily betray it to Parliament, and Ottley as a doting old fool, even though he would only have been in his early forties at the time.[62]

The parliamentarian county committee in Shropshire was a small one, and remained so throughout the duration of the war; initially established on 23 July 1642 to prevent the execution of the Commission of Array, it consisted of William Pierrepoint, Richard More and Sir John Corbet, who were tasked with not only fund-raising but also securing the county magazines for the 'Peace of the… County.'[63] The committee's impact was initially very limited in royalist-held Shropshire, though there were pockets of support for Parliament particularly amongst Shrewsbury's aldermen and burgesses, as well as in the more northern half of the county around Wem, and, to a certain extent, Oswestry.[64] In 1642-3, however, many people either actively supported the crown, or were passive as to their allegiance, simply paying their obligations to both sides when required to do so. This became increasingly common, as the personal and financial tolls of war began to bite. The committee increased in size in August 1642 when Serjeant John Wilde, Lawrence Whittaker, John Blakiston and William Wheeler, all MPs from outside the county, were added. On the face of it, none of them had any local links, and in fact Wilde was appointed onto the Yorkshire committee the same day.[65] Wilde, however, was related to William

[62] Ann Hughes, 'King, Parliament and the localities in the English Civil War,' in Richard Cust, and Ann Hughes, eds, *The English Civil War* (London: Arnold, 1997), pp.261-287. John Morrill, ed., *Reactions to the Civil War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1982), p.15. BL: Add.MS 18981, fol.8.
[63] *LJ*, Volume 5, p.233.
[64] *Ibid.*, p.270.
[65] *CJ*, Volume 2, p.741.

Pierrepoint through Pierrepoint's marriage to Anne, the daughter of Sir Thomas Harries of Tong castle.[66]

Throughout the war years, further parliamentarian committees were established within the county to deal with specific financial issues. Even though the membership of the local committee was meagre, they did have the power of Parliament behind them, and over the years, numbers increased. Yet there were limits to what they could achieve, due to royalist control of the territory, so some of the central directives could simply not be complied with; for example, John Weld never appeared before any tribunal to answer the charge of colluding with the Grand Jury in August 1642. This was the case with the other local royalists who had been summonsed for delinquency, such as John Studley, the former mayor of Shrewsbury, who allegedly had proclaimed that the Earl of Essex, then the lord lieutenant of the county, and his followers were traitors. Parliament did continue to enforce control over certain aspects of local officialdom, for not only had they stripped the Earl of Bridgewater of his position as lord lieutenant of the county in early 1642, but in September of that year they stripped Sir Richard Lee, Sir Thomas Wolryche, John Weld, Sir Vincent Corbet, Sir William Whitmore and Edward Acton of their deputy lieutenancies, replacing them with Walter Barker, Humphrey Walcott, Captain Walter Long, Sir Gilbert Cornewall and Thomas Hunt. On the same day, they also ordered that two MPs, Sir Richard Lee and Sir Robert Howard, be disabled for being active in the illegal Commission of Array. Many of the parliamentarian committee members combined their local responsibilities with their work in central government. William Spurstowe sat on a committee considering the King's revenue, along with Sir John Corbet who was also tasked with the raising of money and plate locally. Pierrepoint sat on the committee which attempted to negotiate terms with the King in September 1642, as well as being involved in the raising of dragoons, along with More and Corbet.[67]

The first official recognition of the Shropshire committee came on 10 April 1643, when its members joined with those of Warwickshire, Coventry, Staffordshire and Lichfield. The members named under

[66] *ODNB*, entry by Robert Zaller.
[67] *CJ*, Volume 2, pp.755,762,763,768,771,774.

the Ordinance were William Pierrepoint, Sir John Corbet, Sir Gilbert Cornewall, Sir Morton Briggs, Richard More, Robert Corbet, Thomas Mytton, Andrew Lloyd, Humphrey Mackworth, Thomas Hunt, Thomas Niccolls, John Corbet of Anson, Lancelot Lee, Samuel More, Robert Talbot, Hercules Kinnersley, William Rowley, Thomas Knight, John Prowde and John Lloyd. Sir John Corbet was appointed as colonel general of all the forces within the county.[68] Briggs, whose family estate was at Haughton, was knighted by Charles I on 21 August 1641, his second son (also called Morton) fought and died for the crown, whilst his heir Humphrey was a parliamentarian who became MP for Much Wenlock in 1645.[69] Hercules Kinnersley from Cleobury North was a commissioner of the Peace, and was described in June 1641 as a 'long active man in the business of this county, being often employed as a commissioner and Grand Juryman of the Assizes and Quarter Sessions, and was one of the jury when this court and the muster master offices were presented as grievances.'[70] Samuel More of Linley was the son of Richard. He was a captain in the parliamentary army put in charge of defending Hopton castle, and later became MP for both Shropshire and Bishop's Castle.[71] Lancelot Lee of Cotton Hall at Alveley was part of a long-established family who would have been described as minor gentry, but whose pedigree was noted in the *Visitation of Shropshire* in 1623. He was related to Sir Richard Lee of Langley who was a supporter of the crown.[72] As for John Corbet of Auston or Anson, he was the eldest son of Robert Corbet. He was married to Abigail, the daughter of Isaac Pennington, and inherited his father's lands in Pontesbury. Presumably he was from an offshoot branch of the Corbet family, as their pedigree does refer to Auston or Aston, and was later elected as MP for Bishop's Castle.[73] He was also probably related to the More family of Linley, being referred to in correspondence as Samuel More's cousin.[74] Robert Talbot's background is a mystery, but the rest of the commissioners had all been involved with the administration of Shrewsbury. Thomas Knight had been bailiff in 1625 and 1631, and

[68] *A & O,* Volume 1, p.126.
[69] Burke, *Extinct Baronetcies,* p.82.
[70] Wanklyn, *'*Allegiance', pp.46,52.
[71] H.T Weyman, 'Shropshire members of Parliament,' *TSANHS,* 4th Series, Volume XI (1927-8) pp.153-184 (p.182), and 'Members of Parliament for Bishop's Castle', *TSANHS*, 2nd series, Volume X (1898), pp.33-68, (pp.49-50).
[72] *HV,* Part II, pp.314-320.
[73] *Ibid.*, Part 1, p.143.
[74] BCHC – First Minute Book, fol.209.

was appointed mayor in 1646, and John Prowde had been bailiff in 1635, became an alderman in 1638, and was mayor in 1650. William Rowley had held the position of bailiff in 1638, and John Lloyd had been appointed as an assistant to the corporation in 1638.[75]

## The Unfolding Conflict in Shropshire:

## Royalism, Parliamentarianism and Neutralism

The county's response to the rumblings of war was initially defensive, rather than offensive. Shrewsbury started to prepare its defences, seemingly as a matter of self-preservation more than anything else, during the later months of 1641. There was certainly no overwhelming expression of loyalty to either side, simply a recognition that this was a dangerous and unsettled time. On 1 October, there was an agreement to strengthen the town's three gates and it was ordered that 'the Water-loade heade shall forthwith be repayred and a cage builded at the Welsh Bridge,' and in the following January it was decided to test the town's ordnance and purchase new cannon costing £20. In March of the following year the town forwarded a petition to London asking that they be allowed to put themselves into a posture of defence due to the possibility of dangerous Papist activities.[76] By May 1642, it was increasingly apparent that more defences were necessary in this 'tyme of emenente danger', and so six armed guards were posted on the gates, with a further two to patrol the suburbs, during the day, with double that number at night, and repairs to the walls were undertaken costing £50. The number of guards

[75] Thomas Phillips, *The History and Antiquities of Shrewsbury*, Volume 1 (Shrewsbury, 1837), p.184 and Corbet, *Corbets*, p.313.
[76] William Dugdale, *A Short View of the Late Troubles* (London, 1681), p.89.

was doubled again in August, portcullises and chains were put on the gates and the townspeople were urged to arm themselves from attack.[77]

On 22 August 1642, the corporation set up an association of men to patrol the town for its safety, and to prevent unlawful force.[78] Certainly, the mayor's accounts show a marked increase in repair work, throughout the early months of 1642, to both the walls and the town's ordnance, with loads of sand, lime, wood and stone coming in from surrounding areas to be used on the town walls and bridges.[79] In the summer there were already some moves to muster the local men for training. Holy Cross parish was seemingly actively royalist, paying for 'their trayned soldiers who had done service at Whitchurch' in May of that year, as well as for 'gun stocks repayred for the use of Captaine Oatley.'[80] Thomas Hunt, a parliamentarian, described by Baxter as a 'plain hearted, honest, godly Man, entirely beloved, and trusted by the Soldiers for his Honesty,'[81] had started to drill volunteers under the town walls, an action endorsed and encouraged by Parliament, who granted indemnity to anyone undertaking the task, as being necessary for the 'Service and Defence of his Majesty and the Kingdom.'[82] He was later made captain of his own troop of horse, by the Earl of Essex in October 1644.

On 2 August 1642, matters in Shrewsbury came to a head. It had come to the county committee's notice that the Commission of Array was to be affected, and the mustering and training of men for the royalist cause had been arranged. When the two factions met, there was an initial exchange of words which developed into disorderly conduct when parliamentary proclamations, denying the legality of the commissions, were read out to the crowd. According to Pierrepoint, More and Corbet, this was well received by the assembled crowd, despite Sir Paul Harris, Francis Ottley, Edward Cressett and Richard Gibbons trying to disrupt proceedings. The following day, however, the situation became more serious;

[77] *HoS*, Volume 1, pp.415-416.
[78] SA:6001/235.
[79] SA:3365/586.
[80] SA: P250 C/1/1.
[81] Matthew Sylvester, *Reliquiae Baxterianae or Mr Richard Baxter's Narrative of the most Memorable Passages of his life and times* (London, 1696), p.45.
[82] *CJ*, Volume 2, pp.679-680.

Thomas Hunt trained 300 'orderly men' for Parliament, whilst at Atcham and Montford Bridge Sir Vincent Corbet and Richard Lloyd trained their men. Then 'Mr. Ottley, under Colour of the commission of Array, with the high sheriff, the mayor of this Town, many of the commissioners of Array, with the Irish and other Commanders, of which near One Hundred Were Townsmen of Shrousebury, the rest Strangers, marched up and down the Town. This Night there was a great Uproar, but ended without Hurt.'[83] Parliament sent for Harris, Weld, Ottley, Cressett, Gibbons and the cleric Peter Studley claiming that they were delinquents, but none appeared to answer the charges.[84] On 8 August the Grand Jury at the Shropshire Assizes declared their loyalty to the King, and indicted Thomas Hunt for training and exercising men under a parliamentary ordinance, but Parliament commanded that the indictment be withdrawn, and ordered an investigation into whether the empanelled jury had been hand-picked by the royalist faction in the county.[85] Yet, despite Parliament's view that the Grand Jury had no business meddling in such affairs, the declaration stood.

The corporation of Shrewsbury was sending out a message of guarded neutrality, for despite all that had gone on within the town during August, an entry in the Book of Orders for 30 August directed that no inhabitant should wear either side's colours but, 'considering the greate distraction that are now in in this Kingdom, and the greater feares the inhabitants of this corporation are in, have by one unanimous consent have agreed to joyne together for the preservation of the peace of this towne and liberties against all unlawfull force.'[86] In reality, this posture was probably a move towards self-preservation rather than an affectation towards neutrality in the conflict, as was the corporation's disassociation a month later 'from all unlawfull force', which could be taken by either side as a positive reassurance of loyalty.[87]

[83] *HJ*, Volume 5, pp.269-270.
[84] *CJ*, Volume 2, pp.706-707. Parliamentary Archives: HL/PO/JO/10/1/130.
[85] *Ibid.*, p.737.
[86] *HoS*, Volume I, pp.416-417.
[87] *HoS*, Volume 1, p.418.

On 2 September the commissioners of Array for Shropshire, Cheshire, Denbighshire and Flintshire met at Whitchurch as it was felt that there was 'imminent danger' lurking in their respective counties, with accounts of looting and plundering. To ensure the safety of people's 'wives children and estates,' they agreed upon seven resolutions by which they would conduct their business on a weekly basis for the good of their respective counties in this and in defence of the crown.[88] A couple of the local signatories, Sir Thomas Hanmer of Bettisfield, MP for Flint, who was the King's cup bearer, and Thomas Eyton, related to the Ottleys on his mother's side, were with the King at Nottingham and passed messages back home.[89] As Charles prepared to leave Nottingham he ordered Ottley to gather together and train a 'Companie of two hundred ffoote' under his command in order to secure the town.[90] When he got to Derby he was assured of receiving a warm welcome from Shropshire, as Shrewsbury was 'at his devotion,' the corporation having agreed to provide the best entertainment they could for the King and his party.[91] With that guarantee he and his party headed west towards Wales.[92] Shropshire in general, but Shrewsbury in particular, was seen as an important stronghold by the crown, close to Wales and lying half way between Chester and Hereford, it would make a good rallying point and stepping stone for the territory over the border. Charles stopped at Wellington on 19 September, where he was met by the sheriff, John Weld. along with a 'train of thirty-four liveries.'[93] Charles gave his troops their military orders, assuring the faithful that he would 'defend and maintain the true reformed protestant religion' whilst governing by 'the known laws of the land' and maintaining 'the just privileges and freedoms of Parliament'.[94] He ordered that this declaration be published throughout the county, and Weld was knighted at Wellington for the service he had shown.[95]

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[88] STA: D868/2/41.
[89] Sir Henry Bunbury, *The correspondence of Sir Thomas Hanmer with a memoir of his life* (London, 1838), pp.2-3. *HV*, Part I, p.182.
[90] Ottley Papers, *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VI, (1894), pp.42-43.
[91] SA:6001/235.
[92] Edward, Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*, Book VI (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1848), p.295.
[93] J.G. Farrow, *The Great Civil War in Shropshire, 1642-1649* (Shrewsbury: Wilding & Son, 1926), p.34.
[94] Clarendon, *History*, Book VI, p.295.
[95] *SPR*, Diocese of Hereford, Volume XVI: *Register of Willey* (Shropshire Parish Register Society, 1915), p.v. See also SA:XLS 13757.

Shrewsbury itself was described by Clarendon as being 'very commodious in all respects.'[96] Upon his arrival on 20 September, the King was warmly welcomed, as the corporation had already mandated that the royal party be given free access to the town, along with its keys, staff and mace, and be afforded the best entertainment possible.[97] Sir Richard Newport gave the first positive and unequivocal sign of his loyalty to the crown when he donated £6,000 to the King for his cause, and was made a baron as a result.[98] Other loyal subjects in the town were also more than generous in their gifts; Thomas Lyster handed over a purse of gold, and was knighted as a reward, and similar honours were bestowed on Thomas Eyton and Thomas Scriven, presumably in recognition of their donations.[99] A £600 loan was willingly offered up and taken from the coffers of Shrewsbury school, which later resulted in those who had made the loan being unsuccessfully sued by the corporation in 1652, and the corporation voted to give £100 to the Prince of Wales and 100 marks to the Duke of York.[100] The King and his entourage stayed in Shrewsbury for twenty days in total, the visit only being broken by a trip to Chester to gather more support. Whilst in the town he made a rallying speech at the town's Gay Meadow, encouraging the gentlemen of the county who had gathered to donate not only money but also arms, horses and plate to his campaign, as he 'must onley live on the ayde and reliefe of my people.'[101] Many had answered the summons sent by the sheriff and the high constables of the county hundreds, demanding their attendance in the town on 28 September to provide details of their proposed contributions towards crown funds.[102]

[96] Clarendon, *History*, Book VI, p.303.
[97] *HoS*, Volume 1, p.418. William Leighton, 'The mayor of Shrewsbury's intended speech, 1642', *TSANHS*, 1st series, Volume II (1879), pp.39-399, (p.398).
[98] Clarendon, *History*, Book VI, p.303.
[99] *HoS*, Volume 1, p.423.
[100] Phillips, *Shrewsbury*, Volume 1, p.34. SA:XLS2590 – those who were sued were Richard Gibbons (former mayor) Thomas Chaloner the headmaster, the Robert and Thomas Betton, the sons and executors of the estate of Robert Betton (a senior alderman at the time). SA:6001/235.
[101] *His Majesties Speech at Shrewsbury, on Michaelmas Eve last, to the Gentry and Commons of the County of Salop, there assembled* (London, 1642), and Rushworth, Volume 5, pp. 1-25.
[102] STA: D593/P/8/1/4.

A royal printer was also established in the town, and operated from Charlton Hall in the centre, but seems to have produced little, as by August 1643 (only ten months after his arrival) he was in Bristol.[103] Furthermore, a royal mint was established at Bennett's Hall on Pride Hill in the centre of the town.[104] It was supervised by the loyalist Thomas Bushell, and any plate or other metal valuables donated by county men were melted down to be used as currency. Bushell also provided the clothing for many local soldiers, the lead for their shot and guns for the town walls out of his own pocket; whether this was through pure altruism, a hope of further enhancement, or the measure of a local lack of response to Charles's call for aid, is unclear.[105] When the King left the town on 12 October, he appointed Sir Francis Ottley as governor, and presented the town with two pieces of ordnance, having cost the corporation £19 10s 4d in addition to the donations to his war chest.[106] The visit had been successful, as not only had it brought in large amounts of money and plate for the campaign, but had attracted many from all over the county, not just the environs of Shrewsbury, and gave a boost to the royalist recruitment drive, which was spearheaded in the Pimhill hundred by Sir Paul Harris. Warrants were sent out to all the fit men in the hundred, which encompassed the parishes of Baschurch, Cockshutt, Ellesmere, Fitz, Hordley, Loppington, Montford, Myddle, Great and Little Ness, Petton, Shrawardine and Welshampton. Eligible men were offered fourteen groats a week pay to fight for the King, resulting in thirteen men being recruited. His assistants were also local men, Robert More and Matthew Bagley, both of whom Gough much later described as 'the veriest knaves in Pimhill hundred.'[107] The question of allegiance during the civil war is often hard to fathom, particularly for those lower down the social scale. Some men sought commissions simply to receive recompense to bolster their fading incomes. Gough related several incidents of local men who joined local garrisons, mainly for the protection that they offered, but also to receive a captain's pay to maintain their lands.[108] Not everyone adhered to either the monarchy or Parliament, however, as seen by the petition of Jonathan Langley,

[103] L.C. Lloyd, 'The Book Trade in Shropshire', *TSANHS*, Volume 48, (1935-6), pp. 65-200, (pp.72-84).
[104] SCC HER Number (PRN): 08392.
[105] J.R. Philips, *Memoirs of the Civil War in Wales and the Marches*, Volume 1 (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1874), pp.116-117.
[106] Farrow, *Civil War*, p.40.
[107] Gough, *History of Myddle*, p.67.
[108] *Ibid.*, p.65.

who wrote to Ottley from his refuge in Birmingham, having been forced to leave Shrewsbury because his neutrality was interpreted as disaffection for the crown. In his request to be allowed to return home, he wrote 'I never had any intention nor yet have of taking up arms of either side; my reason, this my protestation already binds me to both King and Parliament.'[109]

It was not just Shrewsbury that supported the King. The other corporations, and most of the major towns followed suit. On 17 August John Weld and several other of the commissioners issued a proclamation from Much Wenlock declaring that they would resist any opposition to the Grand Jury's decision, and urging the local gentlemen to join them in their endeavours.[110] The town seems to have survived the war unscathed, but there is no substantive evidence within the town records concerning the actions of the inhabitants, whether they be offensive or defensive. Although there is no evidence that the town was garrisoned, it would have been well defended by the soldiers at nearby Benthall, Apley House, Madeley and Bridgnorth.[111] Oswestry and Whitchurch in the north and north-west of the county were both originally held for the crown. The former was governed by Colonel Edward Lloyd of Llanforda, an estate close to the town, who was appointed by Lord Capel.[112] Whitchurch was governed by Sir Thomas Scriven, who was mortally wounded during the royalists abortive attempt to capture Wem in October 1643.[113] Although Whitchurch was a meeting place for the commissioners of Array, and was a vital stronghold for the crown, due to its proximity to Nantwich, and Sir William Brereton's parliamentary forces, it was constantly at risk of being captured. It is not clear how heavily defended it was, certainly when Sir Thomas Aston sought shelter in the town after the royalist defeat at Macclesfield in March 1643, the trained bands had been disbanded and the few dragoons who were stationed there were seemingly ineffective.[114] Not all of the local inhabitants were happy with the intrusions that the war

[109] Phillips, 'Ottley Papers', *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VII (1895), pp.263-264.
[110] Parliamentary Archives: HL/PO/JO/10/4.
[111] Stackhouse Acton, *Garrisons of Shropshire* provides a comprehensive guide.
[112] For a helpful description of the Llanforda estate and Lloyd's character/interests see SA: HER number (PRN):07631.
[113] Ottley Papers, *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VII (1895), p.312. Sylvester, *Baxterianae*, p.45.
[114] J. R. Phillips, *Memoirs of the Civil War in Wales and the Marches*, Volume 1, (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1874), p.145.

brought, and as Thomas Eyton found would 'give [them] no wages', nor was there a surgeon in the town.[115]

Bridgnorth's inhabitants, on the other hand, 'as was natural from their hereditary loyalty, espoused heartily the cause of Charles I.'[116] In August 1642, the town was in a state of alert, and the common council paid a local man, Robert Adams, to travel to Coventry to obtain news about the location of the parliamentary regiment of Colonel Brooke. Yet initially, there was an air of complacency amongst town officials, and little was done to ensure the inhabitants' safety. On 18 August, John Weld had issued a warrant ordering the erection of a defensive drawbridge over the Severn, but the Common Council decided against that, and erected posts and chains at several of the entrances, and strengthened the gates instead.[117] When Prince Rupert came through the town in September 1642, he implored the Grand Jury to elect bailiffs that were 'well affected for his Majesty's service,' and the Council elected John Farr and Thomas Dudley, who had both been chamberlains of the corporation between 1635 and 1642.[118] It was only when Colonel Pennyman's regiment was temporarily billeted in the town that the defences were further strengthened at his direction, and, by the end of November, watch guards had been placed at strategic points throughout the town, and the locals were urged to arm themselves.[119] Yet there was still a lack of military training for the townsmen, and it was not until February 1643 that Thomas Corbet of Longnor was tasked with the job.[120] In May 1643, Capel appointed the town's first governor, Thomas Wolryche, who was ordered to fortify the town, and make proper use of the 'trayned band.'[121]

Ludlow's support for the crown was surprising, given the fact that the town officials had bitterly complained about both the ship money and muster master assessments, and the inhabitants had been extremely late in making any payment towards the same. Yet there was great resentment towards

[115] Ottley Papers, *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VI (1894), p.73, pp.67,68. – Eyton's and Corbet's letters to Ottley.
[116] George Bellett, *The History and Antiquities of Bridgnorth* (London: Longmans, 1856), p.130.
[117] *Ibid.*, pp. 131-133. SA:BB/C/1/1/1.
[118] SA:BB/B/4/4/1. SA:BB/D/1/2/1/48-50.
[119] SA:BB/D/1/2/1/52. SA:BB/C/1/1/1.
[120] Ottley Papers, *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VI (1894) pp.74-75.
[121] SA:BB/C/1/1/1, and Bellett, *Bridgnorth*, pp.142-143.

Parliament as well, due to its abolition of the Council in the Marches, which was by the 1640s the main source of income for the town.[122] So the castle was garrisoned for the King, with Richard Herbert being appointed the first governor, but even so the town's response to the demand for funding for the crown was lacklustre.[123] As had been the case with the assessments of the 1630s, the town pleaded poverty. An appeal was made to Lord Capel over the level of the assessment, but still the collection of the tax was slow and sporadic.[124] Furthermore, the order that went out to all eligible townsmen to muster at Shrewsbury on 22nd September 1642 was all but ignored, and in December the absentees were ordered to make themselves known or otherwise be marked as disaffected towards the crown.[125] Yet, the town did pay for defensive measures; the chamberlain's accounts of October 1643 do show that considerable work was undertaken to secure, maintain and repair the town gates and walls, and a new wall at Frog Lane was built.[126] The town's loyalty seemed to remain unswerving, and despite the claims of poverty, money was still found to purchase bottles of burnt sack in 1644, which were distributed to Lord Capel, Somerset Foxe (who was described as the governor), Sir Francis Ottley, Prince Rupert, and Lord Newport, probably as small insurance policies for the future.[127]

Little is known about Bishop's Castle during the wars. It was seemingly not garrisoned, but was considered as being in royalist territory. On 6 December 1642, the Common Hall ordered that each household keep 'the King's watch' throughout the night, arm themselves at their own expense and provide whatever horses they had to the bailiffs upon demand.[128] However, later in the conflict the town was seemingly more concerned with its own defence, than any attempts to help the royalist cause. In March 1644, the town officials ordered that if any townsmen hear a musket shot, they were to go to the aid of the householder in need to prevent any 'plundering or any other violent or wilful breach of his Majesty's peace.'[129]

[122] Michael Faraday, *Ludlow 1085-1660* (Chichester: Phillimore & Co.,1991), p.171-172.
[123] SA:LB/7/7/1/10.
[124] SA:LB/8/3/1/76. SA:LB/7/7/1/11.
[125] SA:LB/7/7/3/54 /55.
[126] SA:LB/8/163/4,5.
[127] SA:LB/8/164/3.
[128] SA:DA1/100/1a, p.203.
[129] SA:DA1/100/1a, p.206.

This attitude of self-preservation became increasingly common as the war progressed, particularly in the south-west of the county. As will be seen, many people simply tried to avoid their obligations to both sides, whether it be by failing to appear at musters or for training, or by neglecting their financial commitments, but there were also some who took a more active stance to protect themselves, and their communities, against the ravages of war. A prime example of this was seen in the village of Clun in the south-west of the county, which came under the lordship of the royalist Howards, but was also influenced by the parliamentarian stance of nearby Hopton. The residents were buffeted by both sides, but had problems with the local royalist garrisons at Stokesay and Lea Hall. The garrison at Stokesay, a fortified medieval manor owned by the Earl of Craven, was commanded by a former mercenary Vangeris who came from the Netherlands, and Clun was a prime target for plunder. Eventually the townspeople decided to defend themselves, and contemporary reports describe 1,500 men from both Clun and Bishop's Castle refusing to attend Prince Maurice's latest muster requests, with the emphatic cry that they had 'taken up Armes for the defence of their lives, their liberties and estates, and that they will sacrifice their blood for the preservation of their country.'[130] *Mercurius Britanicus* sarcastically reported that the reason for the revolt was the 'friendly usage thay received from his Majesty's mercifull officers in those parts: and particularly from one Colonel Van Gare [Vangeris] a Dutchman.'[131] The townspeople demanded that the garrisons be disbanded, Vangeris and his men removed, and they be allowed to appoint their own commanders. One of the leaders of the revolt was a Mr Needham, presumably referring to Gervase Needham, one of the ministers who had declared their loyalty to the crown at the beginning of the war. The townspeople threatened that if their demands were not met then they would call other like-minded people from Leintwardine, just across the border in Herefordshire, to join them.[132]

[130] *A diary, or, an exact journall faithfully communicating the most remarkable proceedings in both houses of Parliament*, Number 40, 13th-20th February 1645.
[131] *Mercurius Britanicus*, Number 65, 6th-13th January 1645, p.517.
[132] *Perfect occurrences of Parliament*, Number 20, 20th-27th December 1644.

This show of resistance against the war was very much in the style of the other later Clubmen movements in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, brought on by the unremitting demands made upon them by local garrisons rather than any for any other purpose. Clun, it can be argued, was entirely neutral in this dispute, for although the common enemy was the royalist troops, there was no hint that there was any preference for Parliament, and the movement was led by Gervase Needham, a royalist, and Francis Harris and Jeremy Powell, both of whom became parliamentarian commissioners. For Bishop's Castle, however, the defiance of its townspeople had dire consequence, as later that year the royalist Sir William Vaughan, the so-called Devil of Shrawardine, raided the town and set fire to part of it, damaging the church.[133] Many other small castles and mansions such as High Ercall and Apley castle were fortified and maintained as garrisons for the crown. Hopton castle, on the other hand, was originally held by Samuel More of Linley for Parliament. It was owned by the parliamentarian MP for Andover, Robert Wallop, and was garrisoned in March 1644, but was taken the following month by Colonel Woodhouse and his men for the King, and in the first show of wartime savagery in the county 'fourty prisoners… were basely murthered after the surrender.'[134]

Not everyone in the county was loyal to the King and certainly there were pockets of parliamentarian support, the most obvious being in Shrewsbury. Yet many of those who had shown open loyalty to Parliament had the foresight to leave the town before the royal visit, if they were able. Many of the merchants may have had concerns about the King, but their business dealings tied them to the town, and so they had no option but to keep quiet about their loyalties and ride out the storm. There were also those who wanted to remain neutral, but these were dangerous times to sit on the fence if remaining in the locality, particularly after the local royalist Committee of War decided that 'all the gentrie of what quality soever that have shewn themselves disaffected or neutrall maye give in caution, that if any enemy come they may find no party to assist them.'[135] It was, however, just as well that some had made

[133] SA: XAuden/228/3/3.

[134] John Corbet, *an historicall relation of the military government of Gloucester, from the beginning of the Civill Warre betweene King and Parliament, to the removall of Colonell Massie from that government to the command of the westerne forces* (1645), p.85. The author is almost certainly the one from Auston/Anson who was probably related to Samuel More.

[135] SA:6001/13291.

themselves scarce, because when Charles I arrived in Bridgnorth on 14 October 1642, he declared that Thomas Hunt, Humphrey Mackworth and Thomas Niccolls were to be apprehended for high treason. Furthermore, with the corporation's agreement, William Rowley, Owen George, John Prowde, John Lloyd, John Lowe, John Mackworth, Richard Cheshire, John Betton, Thomas Wingfield and George Williams were declared to be 'disaffected to his Majesty's person and government, [and] shall be sequestered from the severall meetings till they have cleared themselves.'[136] Other named delinquents were Thomas Mytton, Thomas Gardiner, the unnamed daughter of the late Andrew Studley, Abraham Puller, John Baker, John Bromley, Frank Jones, John Jeffries, John Atcherley, Adam Webb, Thomas Clarke, William Buttrey and John Hopton. Most of those named were tradespeople and aldermen, but Jeffries, Buttrey and Hopton were minor officials (Jeffries a collector of the subsidies, Buttrey a trumpeter and Hopton a mace carrier).[137]

Mackworth, Nicolls and Hunt were all displaced as aldermen of the town for non-residency on 16 November 1642.[138] Mackworth temporarily absented himself from county affairs, as he had been appointed as a steward of Coventry corporation, a post that he held between 1642 and 1645. He also spent some time in London helping to prepare the case against Archbishop Laud on behalf of the people of Shrewsbury, and provided evidence of bribery against the archbishop.[139] In fact, Mackworth was in London in September 1642, and was kept informed of local events by John Prowde.[140] Thomas Nicolls, who had been appointed as an alderman at the same time as Mackworth, was sheriff of Montgomeryshire in 1642, having held the same position in Shropshire the previous year.[141] He moved to Hertfordshire, where he had been granted a year's lease of the delinquent MP Sir John Harrison's estate of Balls Park.[142] As for Thomas Hunt, his whereabouts at that time were unknown, but

[136] *HoS*, Volume 1, pp.430-431.
[137] Ottley Papers, *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VII (1895), p.251.
[138] *HoS*, Volume 1, p.431.
[139] Francis Hargrave, *A Complete Collection of State Trials*, Volume 1 (1777), p.874.
[140] *HMC*, Volume 5, Part 1, (1876), p.49.
[141] William V. Lloyd, 'The Sheriffs of Montgomeryshire', *Collections Historical and Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire and Its Borders*, Volume XXVII (London, 1893), pp.147-214 (pp.156-159). John Brickdale Blakeway, *The Sheriffs of Shropshire, with their armorial bearings* (Shrewsbury: W. and J. Eddowes, 1831).
[142] *LJ*, Volume 6, 1643, p.674. *HoP*, 1604-1629, Volume IV, pp.565-567.

presumably he stayed close by to train the loyal followers of Parliament, but he could also have been living in Staffordshire as he had inherited the manors of Mathfield [Mayfield], near to Ashbourne, along with property in Kingsley and Whiston from his uncle Rowland Heylin in 1631.[143]

As to the rest of those suspended from office, some were detained and were under the guard of the Provost Marshal, others may have prudently decided to quit the town if possible. Robert Charlton may have made it as far as Bristol, but a Mr Barber (Walter Barker of Haughmond?) had been detained by Sir John Weld on the way, and was being held at Bridgnorth.[144] It is not known how many men were held in custody, but William Rowley, Owen George, John Prowde, John Atherley, John Lloyd, John Lowe, Thomas Clark, Richard Cheshire and John Mackworth were arrested, and were detained and guarded by local royalists pending a decision as to whether they be sent off to face the King, or be released with 'speciall caution' for adhering to 'the Rebels forces.' Furthermore, other local drapers, Joseph Lloyd, Nahanyell Proud (Prowde) and John Winchfield, were ordered to appear by the Committee of War with the 'plate they did packe for London,' in order to be questioned about its future use, and whether they knew of others who had lent 'horse, man and monies to the Parliament forces.'[145] There is an assumption that these three men supported Parliament, and that the plate was being sent to London to finance their cause, but Nahanyell Prowde's estates were sequestered in 1651, when he was accused of being an ensign in Major Owen's regiment at Shrewsbury who bore the colours and arms of the King.[146] Whether they ever appeared for questioning, along with the plate, is unknown but others were certainly under guard, as evidenced by a 1649 petition to the mayor and burgesses from Adam Jones, which clearly marked him out as one who had guarded unnamed detainees in 1642.[147] Some supporters were held in the town gaol because of their support for Parliament. On 17 March 1643 Ottley issued orders to his Sergeants, Reginald Shelvocke, Andrew Gibbons and Stephen Davies, along with Josias Lloyd, Humfrey Davis and Thomas Calcopp to apprehend a list of forty-three men, whose only

[143] SA:2922/12/8/1. TNA: PROB/11/161/220.
[144] *HMC*, Volume 5, Part 1, (1876), p.49.
[145] SA:6001/13292.
[146] TNA: SP23/240/83-87.
[147] Farrow, *Civil War,* p.42. See also SA:3365/240, and W.D.G. Fletcher, 'Some Petitions to the Bailiffs of Shrewsbury', *TSANHS*, 3rd Series, Volume 1(1901), pp.135-184, (p.146).

offence seems to have been neglecting their duty to defend the town for the King, rather than any specific act of rebellion against the crown,[148] and to bring them before the provost marshal. What happened to them is unclear, and there is no surviving record of the prisoners. Although there were Assizes held in 1642 before Justice Robert Heath, the only person tried (and acquitted) of treason for being a spy for Parliament was William Brayne from Whixall.[149]

Those inhabitants openly loyal to Parliament were few and far between in the county, certainly at the beginning of the war; many had opted to find safe havens elsewhere in the country, or were deliberately remaining silent until they were more certain of which way the wind was blowing. This could have been the case in Shrewsbury, which in February 1643 was firmly under royalist control; yet seemingly in the town wards, there were several, both men and women, who had 'made defaults in contempt of the King's majesties proclamations', and who were to be brought before Mayor John Studley, to explain themselves. There were thirty-eight in the Welsh ward, all ordinary working men whose occupations included baker, barber, glover, smith and shearmen, but only one gentleman, Thomas Mason, and several widows. Nineteen were summoned from Castle ward, no gentry, and forty-two from Stone ward, which included Dogpole, High Street, Cornmarket, Wyle Cop, Under Wyle and Murivance. In that ward there was one gentleman, Edward Morris, and a doctor. As this occurred only months into the war, the non-compliance could not have been due to financial difficulties, but more likely quiet rebellion.[150] It was not until 10 April 1643 that there was a more official recognition of parliamentary support within the county with the establishment of the larger conjoined Committees of Defence for Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Shropshire.[151]

By the time that the parliamentary committee had been established, Arthur Lord Capel had been made the King's lieutenant-general of Shropshire, Cheshire and North Wales. He was posted to Shrewsbury

[148] Ottley Papers, *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VII (1895), p.279.
[149] J. R. Phillips, *Memoirs*, Volume 1, p.266. J.E. Auden, 'Shropshire and the Royalist Conspiracies between the end of the First Civil War and the Restoration', *TSANHS*, 3rd Series, Volume X (1910), pp.87-168, (p.111).
[150] SA:3365/2241/92.
[151] *A & O*, Volume 1, pp.124-127.

where he headed the local council of war, assisted by Ottley, Henry Bromley, Sir Richard Lee, Sir John Mennes, Sir John Weld and Edward Cressett.[152] Capel was not a particularly capable leader, and began to replace local governors with his own choice of men. At the same time, on the parliamentarian side Mackworth was increasingly called away from his stewardship of Coventry, to devote his attention to his own county, but the county committee found itself under the direct command of Sir Basil Feilding, Earl of Denbigh, commander in chief of the parliamentary army in the region.[153] Yet it was the Cheshire parliamentarian Sir William Brereton who did more to help the Shropshire committee establish themselves, diverting many of his troops into Shropshire. He was only able to do this with the help of Sir Thomas Myddelton of Chirk (Mytton's brother-in-law), who was major general of the parliamentary forces in North Wales. Both men and their troops moved into Shropshire, gathering support within the county, with Wem as their first target. They took it with surprising ease on 11 September 1643, and then built defences around the town, which, according to Baxter, were 'a Ditch little bigger than such as Husbandmen inclose their Grounds with, and this not finished; and the Gates, new made, had no Hinges, but were reared up, and there was but very few Men in the Town'.[154] Mytton was made governor of the town, but Capel attempted to regain it with his men. It was a poor attempt, and the royalists were beaten by only three hundred troops, plus the townspeople, and Capel had to retreat.

The next success for the parliamentary forces was the capture of Longford House, owned by the Earl of Shrewsbury, followed by the regaining of Tong castle, which was owned by William Pierrepoint through his marriage to Elizabeth Harries, but it had been fortified by the royalists.[155] By the end of 1643 Parliament had made several gains, which was a double-edged sword, as, due to Capel's disastrous leadership, Prince Rupert was appointed as both captain general of the local forces and put in charge of the local royalist finances. Capel's presence in Shrewsbury had led to great dissention within the town itself; Shrewsbury had been hard hit by the sheer scale of demands for money and supplies put upon it. An entry in *A Perfect Diurnall* on 4 November 1643 even suggested that Capel had been taken prisoner,

[152] *HoS*, Volume 1, pp.433-434.
[153] *CSPD*, Charles I, 1644, pp.493, 514.
[154] Sylvester, *Baxterianae*, p.45.
[155] Long, *Symonds*, p.172.

presumably by the townsfolk who had fallen out with the garrison men, which, if true, would 'stop the cruell torrent of the enemy, that have a long time infested those parts about Chester and North Wales.'[156] This was patently not true, but a story promoted by a Parliament-supporting newsbook spreading falsehoods to raise morale. There did, however, seem to be some sort of plot to liberate Shrewsbury, apparently foiled by Ottley and his men. There is no doubt that Rupert's appointment bolstered royalist morale, particularly when he wrote to the governor giving him sage advice about renovations to the castle and ordering in supplies. This change in leadership led to Shrewsbury offering a further £1,000 assessment towards royalist funds.[157] Those loyal to the crown were rejuvenated, and Tong was soon recaptured, with Longford 'a large brick howse and seate, spoyld and abusd,' surrendering back to the royalists.[158]

Mytton took the opportunity of Rupert's departure from the county, sent northwards to relieve York, to besiege and capture Oswestry, aided by Myddelton, at the end of June 1644, with Francis Newport being one of the prisoners taken.[159] Denbigh's presence in the county emboldened the parliamentarians, who decided upon Shrewsbury as their next target. Mytton had acquitted himself well during the conflict, not only at Wem, but he and his men had also captured Sir Nicholas Byron, then governor of Chester and his officers, along with a quantity of arms, at Ellesmere.[160] There were, however, distinct tensions between Mytton and the rest of the Shropshire committee, as evidenced in the letter books of Sir William Brereton. The Committee suspected that Mytton wanted to be made their commander in chief, and saw the time that he had spent in London as desertion, even though his wife lived there during the war.[161] They intimated their dislike of Mytton through their letters to Brereton, inferring that he

[156] *A Perfect Diurnall of some Passages in Parliament*, number 16, 30 October-4 November 1643.
[157] *HoS*, Volume 1, p.438-440.
[158] Long, *Symonds*, pp.171-172.
[159] SA:X665/3/60 - *A copy of a letter sent from Sir Tho. Middleton, to the Hon. Lonable William Lenthal Esq. Speaker of the House of Commons concerning the raising of the seige at Oswestree, July 3, 1644.*
[160] *A True relation of a notable surprize and eminent defeat given to the rebells at Elsmere eight miles from Wem in Shropshire* (1644).
[161] R.N. Dore, *The Letter Books of Sir William Brereton*, Volume 1, 31 January-29 May 1645 (Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1984), p.34. Stanley Leighton, 'The Mytton Letters', *Montgomeryshire Historical and Archaeological Collection*, Volume VII (1874), pp.353-376.

could not be trusted to co-operate with them as he 'carries himself crossly towards us in all matters,' nor in their eyes could he be trusted as it was 'no new thing for Col. Mytton to overshoot the truth'.[162] Auden believed that the rest of the Shropshire committee were so jealous of Mytton, that when Denbigh appointed him governor of Oswestry, they argued that it should be their sole decision as to who held that position; nevertheless the House of Lords confirmed the appointment.[163]

In a later, bad tempered committee meeting, allegations of falsehoods, threats and actual physical violence occurred between the parties even though they were fighting for the same cause.[164] One side of the dispute was later raised before the Council of State in December 1649, when it considered the evidence put before it by Colonel Purefoy, a member of the Coventry committee, about various affronts and misdemeanours committed by Denbigh and his men. One of the allegations was that Denbigh had called Humphrey Mackworth a liar and a rascal, threatened to cudgel him and run him through with a sword, because the latter had said that he had heard rumours that two hundred of Denbigh's Horse had fled from a mere thirty of the enemy. Denbigh apparently viewed the Shropshire committee men as knaves who had 'cheated the country' and deserved a cudgelling themselves. In a meeting at Oswestry, a Staffordshire officer, Colonel Stepkin, called Robert Clive a jack a napes, and kicked him in Denbigh's presence. Another of Denbigh's men, Major Freyson, had suggested that his commander 'pluck the Committee at Wem out by the ears.' Denbigh had apparently refused to return to Shropshire until some of the local committee, particularly Mackworth, had been dispensed with; he had also, upon his own warrant and without any consultation, released five men from Wem who had been imprisoned at Nantwich for aiding the enemy, allowing them home, 'at liberty to affront the Committee.'[165] As to the truth of the allegations, there is no evidence of any response from Denbigh, but he did prove that he could be a peacemaker with some disputes; in a letter of 16 April 1644 addressed to Lieutenant-Colonel Moore, who had been appointed governor of Wem, he advised him not to antagonise members of the

[162] Dore, *Brereton*, Volume 1, pp.33,189, letters 1 and 98.
[163] *HJ*, Volume 7, 1644 (London, 1767-1830), p.686.
[164] J. E. Auden, 'Lieutenant Colonel William Reinking in Shropshire,' *TSANHS,* Volume XLVII (1933-1934), pp 33-47, (pp.36-37).
[165] *CSPD,* Interregnum, 1649-50, pp.444-445.

local committee, writing 'it will advantage you in every way to hold a fair correspondence with them, paying them the respect due to persons entrusted by the Parliament, and who being in their own country deserve to be preferred before strangers in the managing its affairs.'[166] Mytton, on the other hand, did not take kindly to the employment of the professional soldier Lieutenant-Colonel Reinking as the committee's commander, and a dispute later developed as to which of them was responsible for the taking of Shrewsbury.[167]

Shrewsbury was the parliamentarian's main target, and a plan to capture it was carefully arranged for 22 February 1645. The day before, Apley House, belonging to Sir William Whitmore, had been taken and Francis Ottley was amongst those captured.[168] The Shropshire committee, however, only involved Colonel Reinking and Colonel Bowyer and their men in its Shrewsbury plan, ignoring Mytton until the very last minute. Lieutenant Benbow and some of his men effected entry to the castle and opened the gates, seemingly without any resistance. The attack only lasted a few hours and by noon the town was effectively in the hands of Parliament.[169] Captured at the castle were the governor, Sir John Weld, Sir Richard Lee, Sir Thomas Harris and Sir Thomas Lyster amongst others.[170] From then on, the push south began, Stokesay surrendered and Caus Castle fell. Shrawardine castle, belonging to Henry Bromley, was taken on Midsummer Eve 1645 by Thomas Hunt and his men. The outbuildings of the castle and the 'greatest, fairest and best part of the town' were fired as well, and the church chancel destroyed, the remaining stone being later transported to Shrewsbury to make up the Roushill wall.[171] An attempt to take High Ercall around that time was foiled, but Benthall, Dawley manor and Lilleshall abbey all fell or surrendered to Parliament.[172]

[166] *HMC Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Denbigh* (1911), pp.76-77.
[167] *Ibid*. pp.37-41.
[168] John Vicars, *the burning-bush not consumed* (1646), p.115.
[169] *Shrewsbury Taken* (1645), and *Colonel Mittons reply to Lievtenant Colonell Reinkings relation of the taking of Shrewesburie* (1645).
[170] *HoS*, Volume 1, pp.455-456.
[171] SA:552/11/3129.
[172] Dore, *Brereton*, Volume 1, p.241- letter 274.

Finally, at the beginning of 1646, High Ercall surrendered with some ease as the governor, Captain Nicholas Armour, was absent, and the parliamentary forces moved onto Bridgnorth.[173] By 1645 the situation for the town was looking precarious; by then Sir Lewis Kirke was governor, and he ordered that the town's defences be furthered strengthened, and that the town hall and the New House be dismantled.[174] The town held out despite an abortive attack by parliamentarian forces in the autumn of 1645, but at the very end of March 1646 the town was besieged. Refusing the order to surrender, a skirmish ensued with royalist troops retreating to the castle, leaving the citizenry behind to fend for themselves, who reacted by pelting the retreating soldiers with missiles. The governor then set the church on fire, which spread rapidly, destroying large parts of the town, but the parliamentarians continued to bombard and besiege the castle until eventually surrender was effected, and the town left in ruins.[175] That only left Ludlow, which was attacked by Colonels Birch and More on 24 April. A siege ensued which lasted for six weeks, but eventually Woodhouse and his men surrendered to Colonel Birch on 1 June 1646, and the county was finally secured for Parliament.[176] Later that year all garrisons except Shrewsbury and Ludlow were decommissioned, leaving a contingency of troops of four hundred horse and sixty foot, plus officers in the county.

Overall, Shropshire seems to have been a county, like many others, with no real appetite for war, but one that was stuck in the middle of the conflict, particularly because of its closeness to Wales. In the first stages of the war the royalist recruitment drive did have some success, yet many others, as demonstrated by the absenteeism at the Ludlow muster and the later Clubmen uprising, distanced themselves from either side during the conflict. Furthermore, it became increasingly difficult to collect the assessments imposed by both parties. Families, too, were often rent asunder by the sides that were chosen, a prime example being the Corbets. Mytton's children were both royalists (although they did not proclaim any allegiance during the war), as was Humphrey Mackworth's mother. The Pierrepoint family was split in two, with the Earl of Kingston and his eldest son Robert supporting the King,

[173] SA:XLS14746
[174] SA: XBB/C/1/1/1. Bellett, *Bridgnorth*, pp.144-147.
[175] *Ibid.*, pp.163-173.
[176] *The moderate intelligencer*, Number 65, 28th May-4th June 1646.

whereas William and his brother Francis were for Parliament. In a county where so many families were linked through marriage it was always going to be difficult in times of war.[177] The social and financial fallout from the war continued well into the Commonwealth period and sometimes beyond, but by the middle of 1646 Shropshire was a county ruled by Parliament, and those who had earlier been ousted or declared traitors were now in positions of power, whilst many of the former scions of county life were in exile, in prison or in the throes of financial ruin.

## Local Government and Reactions to the War: Changes in Personnel

In September 1642, the composition of the county's administrative system underwent a radical change, particularly so far as Shrewsbury was concerned. That is not to say that the tone of officialdom altered in many aspects; the day-to-day running of county life continued as before, but with some notable absences. After Charles I condemned Mackworth, Hunt and Niccolls for treason, and the corporation suspended several of its members from their duties, they naturally withdrew from public life, some leaving the area completely, whilst others were detained. Those justices with parliamentarian sympathies withdrew from the Commission of the Peace, and their efforts were focussed on the local county committee instead. The routine running of county affairs was in royalist hands, apart from Wem and later Oswestry after they fell to Parliament, but even then, the focus was on the war effort, so, apart

[177] Farrow, *Civil War,* pp.110-111.

from collecting the local assessments needed to finance the conflict, ordinances from Parliament had little effect on county life. It was not until the end of the war that Shrewsbury-based parliamentarians could take an active part in local administration, when Humphrey Mackworth was made governor of Shrewsbury, Samuel More was appointed to the same office at Ludlow, and Andrew Lloyd took up the position in Bridgnorth.[178]

In Ludlow, the same personnel seem to have held office during the war as before it, but then the town had showed no pre-war dissent to the crown, and – with the important exception of Shrewsbury – the same can be said for the other corporations, in so far as can be ascertained from surviving records. Those for Bridgnorth and Bishop's Castle are sparse, and they are non-existent for Oswestry and Much Wenlock. What can be gleaned from the surviving records is that the lower offices were generally held by the same group of people throughout the period; a prime example is Bridgnorth's serjeant at mace, held by John Sunde from 1641 until 1647, and from 1650 until 1658 and then also after the restoration in 1661.[179] In Bishop's Castle no-one was ejected from the town council for their allegiance to either side. There is only one, substantiated, reference to any problems with a burgess, and that was in the case of John Baker, who was accused of ringing the church bells to distract a parliamentarian captain by the name of Webb, so that he and others could steal Webb's horses. Baker was seized by the officer and his men, and, along with other townsmen, held hostage until the offender was produced.[180] In an order written at the Guildhall on 29 March 1643, the bailiff, Esay Thomas, ordered that an immediate lewn of £50 be paid as the town was being impoverished through free quarter, with the caveat that any burgess who did not contribute as required would be disabled, but there is no suggestion that anyone would be disbarred for their allegiance to either side.[181]

While, with the exception of Shrewsbury, the war did not cause major changes to personnel in towns, it did have a major impact upon Shropshire's representation at the centre. The parliamentarian county

[178] *CJ*, Volume 4, 1644-1646, p.565.
[179] SA:BB/B/1/1/6.
[180] E. Griffiths, *History of Bishop's Castle*, Volume LX, Powysland Club (1899), pp.30-31.
[181] BCHC: First Minute Book, fol.209v.

MPs continued to sit, although Richard More died in December 1643 and William Spurstowe in January 1646.[182] William Pierrepoint was appointed to the committee for both Kingdoms on 18 February 1644, and played an active role in its affairs, as did Robert Wallop (although his connection with Shropshire was through property only) who joined him a couple of days later.[183] But those MPs who took up the King's cause were no longer welcomed in the House of Commons. Sir Richard Lee and Sir Robert Howard were disabled from sitting in September 1642. Francis Newport was disabled in January 1644, and the following month Thomas Whitmore, Edward Acton, Ralph Goodwin, Charles Baldwin and Thomas Littleton were barred from their positions.[184] Importantly however, in local affairs they continued to have influence as many had been appointed as commissioners of Array.

Ottley's position as governor of Shrewsbury was not made permanent until mid-January 1643, for fear that the appointment of a member of the minor gentry would upset many within the corporation who felt that they were more suited to the job.[185] Despite reservations, Ottley took his post very seriously, demanding that the townspeople swear an oath upon pain of death that they 'detest and abhor the notorious rebellion that goes under the name of the Parliament Army'.[186] He also went about ensuring that the corporation strengthened the town's defences, and established the manufacture of muskets. Yet he was displaced as governor by Prince Rupert, who favoured professional soldiers to oversee garrisons. Ottley's first successor was Sir Fulke Hunckes, who in turn gave over the office to the professional soldier Sir Michael Earnley on 21 October 1644.[187] It has been suggested that, as a country gentleman, Ottley simply did not have the gravitas or the ability to demand obedience, and, more importantly, gather contributions of money and arms from the populace, many of whom were known to him personally.[188] Yet Ottley seemed to be extraordinarily well-organised, writing to the Earl of Bristol with

[182] D. Brunton and D.H. Pennington, *Members of the Long Parliament,* (London: Archon Books, 1968), p.211.
[183] *CJ,* 1644, pp.18, 21.
[184] Brunton and Pennington, *Long Parliament,* p.211.
[185] Ottley Papers *TSANHS,* 2nd Series, Volume VI (1894), pp.55,57,59-60 – see Clarendon's letter to Ottley dated 19 January 1643, and Phillips's footnotes, *Memoirs*.
[186] *CSPD,* Charles I, 1641-3 p.437.
[187] Farrow, *Civil War,* p.73.
[188] *HoS,* Volume 1, p.433, and William Phillips, 'Shrewsbury During the Civil War of Charles I: Extracts from the Borough Records,' *TSANHS* 2nd Series, Volume X (1898), pp.157-172, (p.158).

a list of suggestions or demands that should be presented to the King, which included the town having the services of an engineer and experienced surgeon, and for the county gunsmiths to work solely from the town.[189]

His concerns, however, were not just with his immediate domain, for he was also interested in wider county issues. He requested the services of six hundred of Lord Howard's men to defend the county, as the trained bands simply could not cope, along with financial support from the royalist associations in North Wales, Cheshire and Lancashire, because he believed that the county was the vanguard of defence against parliamentary forces, as Cheshire had recently tried to negotiate a neutral position in the war.[190] He had no problem in ordering the apprehension of those disaffected towards the crown.[191] The Shropshire Assizes of 1643 reveal that there was a firm policy to prosecute those deemed to be traitors, or otherwise enemies of the crown. One of those detained was the noted parliamentarian Robert Corbet, soon to be appointed to the county committee, who was ironically bailed out of gaol by Sir Richard Newport and Timothy Tourneur.[192] There is some evidence that gunsmiths did come to Shrewsbury to carry on their trade, but they were not always welcome. An undated Quarter Sessions petition from William Nash, a gunsmith, originally from Frodesley in the south of the county, noted that he had relocated to Shrewsbury along with his family, workmen and tools, having been 'commanded by authority from his Majesty' to carry out his business in the town, with accommodation being provided for him. This had annoyed some of the other local residents, particularly John Acton and his wife and children, who had 'pissed upon the Petitioners heads, upon the table and meat reserves' as well as throwing human waste at them.[193] Whether this was because Acton and family were supporters of Parliament, or simply jealousy of the good fortune of Nash is unclear, but the petition provides a picture of a governor who was aware of the town's needs. He welcomed help from those outside Shrewsbury who could support the town's defences, as almost certainly evidenced by the arrival of Michael Betton,

[189] SA:6001/13291-2.
[190] Ottley Papers, *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VII (1895), pp.253-254. *CJ*, Volume 2, 1640-1643, p.912.
[191] *Ibid.*, pp.262-263.
[192] *Ibid.*, pp.269-273.
[193] SA:3365/2241/5.

a cannoneer originally from Aberdeen, who went on to be admitted as a burgess, having settled in the locality in 1647.[194]

Ottley's replacement, Sir Fulke Hunckes, was appointed in the summer of 1643, but his governorship was not particularly successful. His style of leadership did not resonate with the local gentry as he was 'too much of a soldier, and too civil for most of them,' so they successfully petitioned for him to be removed. It did not help that he had fallen out with the local commissioners of Array and Colonel Marrow, one of the officers under his command. Hunckes described the state of the county as 'in very bad condition', the local men being very slow to react to orders, and complaining 'nor was ever any man amongst so many caterpillars as I am'.[195] It was during his governorship that many concerns about the general indebtedness and dearth of supplies within the town were voiced by the corporation. It complained that it was £1,000 in debt, there was no fresh pasture left for grazing, most of the horses had been stolen by soldiers, and it did not have enough coal and candles, whereas trade was depressed and rents had fallen.[196] It could well be that this was a reaction to an outsider taking the place of a local man, but it does seem that the county was suffering, particularly the garrisoned towns and manor houses, where there were greater demands put on the inhabitants. In late summer 1644 Rupert replaced Hunckes with Colonel Robert Broughton, who was under the overall control of Sir Michael Earnley. Earnley remained in post until the fall of Shrewsbury the following year. Other town governors were replaced by Rupert's professional soldiers; Sir Michael Woodhouse became governor of Ludlow; Sir Lewis Kirke took over at Bridgnorth and Sir Abraham Shipman in Oswestry. Unlike Shrewsbury, however, there does not seem to have been any real upheavals so far as the local officials were concerned. Information for Much Wenlock is only now being revealed, but presumably, like Bridgnorth and Ludlow, there was a general sense of continuity so far as the burgesses, bailiffs and other officials were concerned.

[194] SA:3365/68, Assembly Book B entry 125. See also H.E. Forrest, ed., *Shrewsbury Burgess Roll* (Shrewsbury, Shropshire Archaeology and Parish Register Society, 1924), p.24.
[195] *CSPD*, Charles 1, 1644, p.332.
[196] *HoS*, Volume 1, pp.443-445.

At the end of the war roles were reversed, and most of those royalists who had been actively involved in the war effort found themselves incarcerated, either under close guard, or house arrest. Furthermore, their estates would be sequestered, and throughout most of the Commonwealth and Protectorate years, they would find themselves excluded from any involvement in county government. The governorship of Shrewsbury was a position that Mytton desperately wanted, in fact it was said to be something that 'he expects'.[197] His efforts were even supported by an anonymous letter from Shrewsbury, not only praising him for his gallantry, but also suggesting that 'the whole County' wanted him to be appointed to the post.[198] Yet the Committee of both Kingdoms had left the decision to the local committee members, as 'the harmony will be better, which much advances the weale of the county'.[199] As it was, Mytton was made sheriff of the county in 1645 by Parliament, replacing the imprisoned Sir Francis Ottley.[200] On 2 June 1645, the Shrewsbury corporation reinstated Mackworth, Niccolls and Hunt as burgesses, and Thomas Knight regained his status as alderman, whilst Ottley and Tourneur were disbarred for non-residency.[201] So far as central government was concerned, the county returned no MPs with royalist allegiances until towards the very end of the Protectorate, so those who had once played a prominent part in county and central affairs now found themselves out of Parliament and in the wilderness.

## Finances

Waging war has always been an expensive business, both in physical and monetary terms; the British civil wars were no exception, even though the enemies were fellow countrymen. The cost of the conflict has been estimated to have been between five and ten million pounds at the time, which is not an

[197] *The Weekly Account*, Number 13, 26 March- 2 April 1645.
[198] Auden, 'Colonel Reinking', p.41.
[199] *The Moderate Intelligencer*, Number 1, 27 February-6 March 1645.
[200] Phillips, *Shrewsbury*, Volume 1, Appendix, p.26.
[201] *HoS*, Volume 1, p.459.

unsurprising amount given that the cost of the parliamentary navy alone was £500,000 per year, whereas the annual upkeep of each regiment of foot and horse was £15,000 and £30,000 respectively.[202] At the beginning of the war both sides initially relied on donations to their respective cause; Shropshire, being a royalist county, was expected to donate large sums of money to the crown, and some, such as Sir Richard Newport, did contribute generously, and received honours in return, but other donations were not so voluntary. Humphrey Walcot, a very wealthy man who came from a family of London merchants, was seized by royalist troops, despite his loyalty to the crown, and was detained at Ludlow until he ransomed himself. Charles I issued a warrant on 23 September 1643 inviting Walcot to donate £5,000 for the maintenance and support of royalist troops. There is no proof of payment, but Walcot handed over both his war horse and pistols to Prince Rupert.[203] It soon became clear, however, that the conflict was not going to be easily and quickly resolved, so more formalised measures of income were required, as Charles and his supporters could no longer 'live on the ayde and reliefe of my people.'[204]

Another source of income for the crown were recusancy fines, as there were several Catholic families in the county, who naturally gravitated towards the King's cause. One, Sir Basil Brooke of Madeley Court, even became Queen Henrietta's treasurer.[205] In Shropshire the fines were paid early as one lump sum, after negotiations took place between the Earl of Clarendon and local Catholic families, and this ensured that an estimated £4-5,000 was added to the coffers.[206] In the early months of the war the royalist plan for the county was to utilise the horsepower of the local gentry, but this met with a lacklustre response, so on 20 December 1642, eighty county gentlemen, plus the sheriff Henry Bromley, publicly announced that, between themselves and their friends, they would raise sufficient money to fund a troop of dragoons to be commanded by Vincent Corbet. Furthermore, on behalf of the town and liberties of Shrewsbury, Mayor John Studley agreed to raise sufficient funds from the local populace to

[202] Peter Gaunt, *The English Civil Wars 1642-1651* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2003), p.66.
[203] SA:M14432/1. See also John R. Burton, 'The Sequestration Papers of Humphrey Walcot', *TSANHS*, 3rd Series, Volume V (1905), pp.303-348, (pp.314-315). See also Farrow, *Civil War*, p.29.
[204] *His Majesties Speech at Shrewsbury, on Michaelmas Eve last, to the Gentry and Commons of the County of Salop, there assembled* (London, 1642). Rushworth, Volume 5, pp.1-25.
[205] Terry Bracher and Roger Emmett, *Shropshire in the Civil War* (Shropshire: Shropshire Books, 2000), p.3.
[206] Farrow, *Civil War,* p.28.

fund sixty dragoons and two hundred foot soldiers, to be commanded by Francis Ottley to preserve the town for the King. The signatories included Ottley, Weld, Scriven, Viscount Kilmorrey, Paul Harris, Richard Prince and William Owen, amongst others. The social spectrum of those concerned covered the whole range from viscount to gentlemen, with many knights and esquires in between. It also included members of the landed gentry and professional men like Thomas Lister and Thomas Ireland. The Newports were again conspicuous by the absence of their signatures, although the document did declare that the rest of the gentry were too remote to meet with the others, but were well affected. One obvious anomaly was the inclusion of Sir John Corbet, who supported Parliament from the beginning of the war.[207] In fact, the only donations came from the gentry themselves, and then only enough money was raised to finance less than three hundred men. In general, the county inhabitants ignored any requests for voluntary donations, only having to pay such taxes as they were required to do, and, as was seen in Bishop's Castle, communities provided for their own defences by way of lewns.[208]

It was not until the beginning of 1644, when Prince Rupert took overall charge of the Marches, that the issue of funding became more focused, albeit the process was enforced in Rupert's usual less that tactful manner. He demanded a payment of £9,000 from the county, and upon realising that Church Stretton was behind with its payments, he ordered Sheriff Thomas Edwards to collect £500 from the townspeople within twenty-four hours. When Edwards was unable to comply, Rupert sent one hundred musketeers to plunder Edwards's house, even though he was loyal to the crown.[209] He also imposed what Wanklyn described as 'Prince Rupert's tax,' which was a local assessment based on the value of people's estates, to replace the provision of free quarter, which had been frequently abused by soldiers. The tax applied to all with sufficient landholdings, regardless of their allegiance, and so those loyal to the crown who had already made contributions to the cause often found themselves being taxed again.[210] Although little documentation concerning its implementation survives, we know that properties in Acton Scott and the estates of Richard Oakeley of Oakeley, Humphry Walcot of Lydbury, Walter

[207] Anon, *The ingagement and resolution of the principall gentlemen of the county of Salop* (1642).
[208] Hutton, *Royalist War Effort,* p.37.
[209] Farrow, *Civil War,* pp.116-117.
[210] Wanklyn, 'Allegiance', p.291.

Waring of Owlbury, Mrs Blunden from Bishop's Castle and Christopher Clough of Myndtown were valued in connection with this tax.[211] Francis Newport's estate at High Ercall was also subject to the tax according to the representations he made to the local Committee for Compounding.[212]

So far as the collection of voluntary contributions towards the parliamentarian war effort was concerned, they were moderately successful, given the fact that the royalists held sway over the county. In September 1642, Richard More reported to Parliament that he had collected £120 in plate.[213] This was an inconsequential amount when taken alongside the contributions the local gentry had made to the royalist cause; and it was even a lot less than the monies collected by parliamentarians in neighbouring royalist Herefordshire. Sir Robert Harley reported that he had collected £350-worth of plate and promised £150 plus two horses more, which was a great achievement considering that Herefordshire was a much poorer county than Shropshire if previous assessments, such as those imposed for ship money, were considered.[214] So, although the voluntary contributions were a positive sign that not all of Shropshire supported the crown, the low amount collected, in a relatively wealthy county, could also be a sign of the general antipathy towards the conflict, even so early in the war.

There were other means of financing the war. Excise duties were imposed by both sides on various goods, and from 1643/44 a tax on income was also imposed on all but the very poor. This last tax was dubbed the Contribution by royalists and the Assessment by Parliament. It was a lucrative tax, and collected at a local level extremely effectively, bringing in around £35,000 per week for Parliament who had set the rate at between ten and twelve percent.[215] In February 1643, the townspeople of Shrewsbury were expected to raise £402 to pay arrears of the soldiers' salaries, and it was agreed with the mayor that extra funding would be found to afford Ottley a stipend of £20 per week along with

[211] *Ibid*. W.G.D. Fletcher, 'The Sequestration Papers of Richard Oakley', *TSANHS*, 4th Series, Volume 11 (1923-4), pp.193-205 (p.193). *CJ*, Volume 4: 1644-1646, p.647. *CCC*, Part 2, p.1119.
[212] William Phillips, ed., 'The Sequestration Papers of Sir Richard First Baron Newport and Sir Francis Newport his Son', *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume XII (1900), pp.1-38 (pp.21-22). *CCC*, Part 3, pp.924-926, and *CJ:* Volume 5, 1646-1648, pp.508-510.
[213] *Ibid.*, p.774.
[214] *Ibid.*, p.772.
[215] Gaunt, *English Civil Wars*, p.68.

regular half pay for this officers.[216] The 1644 Assessment return from September to November showed that Shrewsbury and its liberties paid a total of £268 8s 5d into the fund, with notably Lady Corbett paying over Acton Reynald's contribution.[217] Not all contributions were regular, some of the townships were far more aware of their responsibilities and payments seemed to drop off as the war progressed. It was noticeable that after November 1644, the payments dropped away sharply. This could be due to dissatisfaction with having to pay both sides in the conflict, or a genuine lack of money during the winter months.

From June 1642, Parliament began to pass financial ordinances. Initially they asked loyal citizens to contribute money, plate and horses on the basis that they would eventually be repaid with interest.[218] The need for a faster and regular source of income resulted in a further ordinance being passed in November 1642, which ordered that all those who were financially eligible, but who had not contributed to Parliament's cause, had to forfeit up to one twentieth of their estate.[219] In February the following year, Shropshire was ordered to pay £375 per week under a new assessment which was imposed to finance the army, with William Pierrepoint, Richard More, both Robert and Sir John Corbet, Thomas Mytton, Walter Barker, Thomas Nicolls, Humphrey Mackworth, Andrew Lloyd and Lancelot Lee, being ultimately responsible for its collection, and transmission to the Treasury at the Guildhall.[220] No-one was exempt from the assessment, with foreigners and Catholics having to pay double the amount. More financial measures were imposed in May 1643 encompassing anyone with an income of over £10 per year or an estate worth more than £100, who now had to pay one fifth of their annual income to their local committee.[221] There was no formal parliamentary committee in the county until April 1643, however, so the county's ability to raise these funds was severely limited during the early stages of the war.

[216] Ottley Papers, *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VIII (1898), p.224.
[217] SA:3365/589/1.
[218] *A & O*, Volume 1, pp.6-9.
[219] *Ibid.*, pp.38-40.
[220] *Ibid.*, pp.85-100.
[221] *Ibid.*, pp.145-155.

It was not until June 1644 that an ordinance formally established a Committee of Safety for Shropshire, which was given powers to enforce all previous enactments both financial and otherwise.[222] The original committee members were joined by an influx of newcomers, as Parliament started slowly to gain more control over the county. The committee now numbered twenty-nine men, and the original members – Pierrepoint, Mackworth, Hunt, Mytton, Niccolls, Sir John Corbet, Andrew Lloyd, Samuel More, and John Corbet – were joined by Sir William Brereton, Sir Thomas Myddelton, Walter Long, Robert Wallop, William Berkeley, W. Arsherst (William Ashurst, MP for Newton in Lancashire), Harcourt Leighton, John Bradshaw, William Spurstowe, Humphrey Edwards, John Heylin, Robert Clive, Robert Charlton, Leighton Owen, Thomas More, Sylvanus Taylor, Samuel Kynaston, Arthur Ward of Cotton, Christopher Meredith and Francis Shute. Some of the original committee members were omitted; Richard More had died in 1643, and William Rowley and John Prowde were probably in royalist detention at that time and so would have been unable to take an active part in affairs.

Most of the names on the list are familiar, but some were outsiders, such as William Berkeley, William Ashurst, and Walter Long who was a Wiltshire MP and who had seen service for Parliament in the war, though later, after being disabled during Pride's Purge, altered his allegiance and went into exile with other royalists.[223] Other non-locals were John Bradshaw, who presumably was the near neighbour and friend of Brereton, later to become chief justice of Chester and North Wales, and president of the High Court that tried Charles I.[224] Thomas More, who was the brother of Samuel and son of Richard, would later become an MP, as would Humphrey Edwards, Robert Clive of Styche and Robert Charlton of Apley. Harcourt Leighton of Plaish was the son of Sir William Leighton, former MP for Much Wenlock, and was a captain in the parliamentarian army who later fought at Naseby, and became a JP at the end of the war.[225] There is no real information in existence about the origin of John Heylin, though Gough makes mention of such a man living in Alderton, but he was a royalist captain, garrisoned at

[222] *Ibid.*, pp.446-450.
[223] *HoP*,1604-1629, Volume V, pp.156-161(Long).
[224] *ODNB*, entry by Sean Kelsey.
[225] Offley Wakeman, ed., *Abstract of the Orders made by the Court of Quarter Sessions for Shropshire*, Volume I (Shrewsbury: Shropshire County Council, undated), p. ix.

Shrewsbury, so it could not possibly be him.[226] It can be assumed, however, that he was a descendant of the Puritan Rowland Heylin and therefore related through marriage to both Thomas Niccolls and Thomas Hunt. Leighton Owen of Bragginton near Alberbury was commissioned as a parliamentarian captain. All that is known of Sylvanus Taylor was that he came from Harley, Samuel Kynaston was from Hordley, and the origins of Meredith and Shute are not known, except that they, along with Arthur Ward, were all described as gentlemen.[227] When looking at purely geographical factors there is a particular absence of parliamentary commissioners from the north of the county, as was the case with the royalist commissioners of Array, most came from Shrewsbury or the south and south west of the county with some support from the north western quarter around Oswestry. Yet there were none from Whitchurch or Wem, and Sir John Corbet and Robert Clive were the only commissioners who could be classified as coming the north east of the county coming from Adderley and Styche which was slightly further north.

The sequestration and subsequent compounding of delinquents' estates was one of the most lucrative means of finance, certainly so far as Parliament was concerned. It was a measure used by both sides during the war (Parliament towards the end and royalists at the beginning) to seize the properties of those men (and some women) who were held to have aided or abetted the opposition, but this could also encompass those who remained neutral, and in Parliament's case also included Catholics.[228] Sequestration measures will only be discussed briefly in this chapter, as most of the cases in Shropshire were not finalised until after the war had ended. Within the county there is little surviving evidence of royalists enforcing sequestrations, though some leading parliamentarians undoubtedly did have their estates seized and goods taken. Thomas Nicolls's property at Boycott near Pontesbury was ransacked, even before he was declared a traitor by Charles I, and those involved 'burned his writings, spoiled his

[226] Gough, *History of Myddle,* p.90.
[227] *HoS,* Volume 1, p.463. Alexander Chalmers, *The General Biographical Dictionary,* Volume XXIX (London, 1816), p.187. *HV,* Part II, p.296.
[228] Gaunt, *English Civil Wars,* p.68.

house, sold his furnace and the iron of his carts.'[229] He complained to the House of Lords that as a result of his service to Parliament he was 'wholly stripped out of his Estate of Inheritance, to the Value of near Nine Hundred Pounds per Annum, beside his Personal Estates is taken away, and he thereby deprived of Subsistence for himself, Wife and Seven children and Family.'[230] He had inherited estates in Kinnerton and Ryton amongst other properties from his uncle Rowland Heylin.[231] Thomas Mytton also seemed to have suffered in this way, as the governor of Chester, Sir Nicholas Byron, sent out a Commission for all the arms, horse and cattle at his house to be seized on behalf of the crown.[232] In fact, in March 1645, William and George Crosse of Ford, just outside Shrewsbury, appeared before the local Committee for Compounding accused of plundering both Mytton's and Myddelton's ironworks, for use by the King's army, but also in order to sell some on for their own profit.[233] The seizure of Sir John Corbet's assets became the subject of debate in the Commons, and both Humphrey Mackworth and Samuel More lost their family estates through the royal sequestration procedures, even though Mackworth's lands were subject to a £300 mortgage.[234]

In September 1643 Parliament established the Committee of Compounding which met at Goldsmith's Hall in London. Its initial job was to secure finance for the Scottish army, but it began dealing with delinquents' affairs in July 1644. It oversaw the national policy of the confiscation of delinquents' estates, and set the fines payable to secure the release of sequestered property. The day-to-day administration was carried out at a local level, and the Shropshire records of parliamentary sequestration are generally intact. Most of them are straightforward, but it will be shown that Shropshire, like many other counties, had its difficulties, not only with the personnel employed, but also with the administration of sequestered estates; this begs the question whether their actions were purely for

[229] Lloyd, *Sheriffs of Montgomeryshire,* p.157.
[230] *LJ*, Volume 6, 1643, p.674.
[231] SA:2992/12/8/1.
[232] Stanley Leighton, 'The Mytton Letters', *Montgomeryshire Historical and Archaeological Collection*, Volume VII (1874), pp. pp.353-376, (p.359) – letter dated 1st March 1642(3) from John Morris.
[233] *CCC,* Part 2, p.879.
[234] *CJ,* 1643-4, p.31. Ottley Papers, *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VII (1895), pp.298-299. *HMC, Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Bath*, Volume 1 (1904), p.36.

financial reasons, or whether there an element of retribution and /or collusion behind some of their seizures. The Shropshire committee was part of the Committee of Safety, and its remit was to concern itself with 'the personall estates of all Papists and Delinquents of that Countie; as have been, are, or shall be active in this unnaturall Warre against the Parliament'.[235]

Its members were mainly local men, apart from Sir William Brereton, Sir Thomas Myddelton and William Berkeley, who was described as an alderman of London, but Brereton and Myddelton had fought in the county during the war, so were familiar with the people and places involved.[236] The formal ordinances that allowed for such confiscations and seizures throughout the country were already in place, having been passed in March and August 1643. The latter allowed for the sequestration of the estates of Catholics, who had to compound at the rate of two-thirds of their personal and real estate.[237] The local committee liaised directly with the Committee for Compounding based at Goldsmith's Hall and operated within detailed rules and regulations set out in several ordinances of Parliament. The local committees were urged to secure payments quickly, particularly as in general the monies raised went to the local community. Fines were imposed upon committees who did not act with due diligence. Shropshire was relatively successful in gathering in the compounding fines, and in total around £56,000 was raised.[238] The sequestration process was, however, fraught with difficulties, as there were arguments over valuation figures, petitions from claimants on the estate, restriction of the powers of the committee, and poor or negligent record keeping. [239]

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[235] *A & O*, Volume 1, pp.446-450.

[236] Alfred R. Beaven, *The Aldermen of the City of London. Temp Henry II – 1912*, Volume II (London: Eden Fisher & Company Limited, 1913), p.66. Berkeley was a master haberdasher who represented the Vintry ward between 1643 and 1645. He was also a commissioner of customs at that time. There are no obvious links to Shropshire. Phillips, *Memoirs*, Volume 1, pp.172-173,1162-1164, *ODNB*, entry for Thomas Mytton by Stephen K. Roberts.

[237] *A & O*, Volume 1, pp.106-117,254-260. Certain provisos were put in place, for example they had to have been convicted for Recusancy, have harboured catholic priests or Jesuits since 29th November 1642, attended Mass from at least the end of March 1642, brought their children or wards up as Catholics, and being over 21 refused to take a proscribed oath denouncing their faith.

[238] Farrow, *Civil War*, p.119. See also, Askew Roberts, 'The Shropshire Compounders', *TSANHS*, 1st series, Volume IV (1881), pp.156-158. Stackhouse Acton, *Garrisons*, pp.19-20.

[239] *CCC*, Part 2, pp.1040-1041, the case of Lawrence Benthall and James Lacon where the compounders complained that not only had the local committee seized their coal mines, but that they had overvalued them. Also, Preface to *CCC*, Part 1, pp. V-XXIV.

# Local Issues

It is apparent that, in general, everyday life did not radically change for many, particularly those in the more remote areas of the shire. The main difficulty that everyone faced was the sheer weight of financial demands put upon them by the war, whether for billeting soldiers without immediate recompense, the theft of personal goods by looting soldiers, or the assessments and taxes imposed upon them to finance a war that most had no desire to get involved in. In Shrewsbury, the demand for contributions was high; in 1643-44, £750 was raised which went towards fortification alone.[240] On top of that the county had to find £375 per week under a parliamentary ordinance, a sum that increased in September 1644, when the populace was ordered to pay an additional £62 10s per week to maintain troops in Ireland.[241] Yet, not only did the garrisoned soldiers' daily needs have to be provided for (that year Sir Francis Ottley and his men received £129 9s), but also there was a cost to entertain officers, and not just those officers stationed within the county, as a donation of sugar and wine was sent to Sir Nicholas Byron in 1644.[242] It was no wonder that the townspeople rapidly became disaffected.

The royalist Council of War (minus Ottley) met in Shrewsbury in March 1644, and published the order to all present or former bailiffs that they should gather the contributions and sort out sequestered property quickly, with all monies going direct to the commissioners.[243] There are numerous petitions during 1644 from Shrewsbury inhabitants concerning their inability to pay their assessments, and that included Thomas Ireland esquire, a former sheriff of the county and justice of the peace, who had signed the *Ingagement* in December 1642. He was descended from a family of wealthy cloth merchants who

[240] SA:3365/588/2.
[241] *A & O*, Volume 1, pp.531,533.
[242] SA:3365/588/2/25-26.
[243] William Phillips, 'Shrewsbury during the Civil War of Charles I', *TSANHS*, Series 2, Volume X (1898), pp.157-172, (pp.158-159).

had used their wealth to not only purchase a country estate at Albrighton but commission the building of an elaborate town house in Shrewsbury, and who had begun to establish themselves as lesser gentry.[244] Another petitioner was John Betton the former mayor's brother.[245] Others, such as John and Elizabeth Crome of Frankwell, were 'plundered of a piece of cloth worth £2 10s, at the hands of the Cavaliers.'[246]

In Ludlow there was an allegation made by Richard Wilkes, later to become bailiff of the town in 1648, that 'some ill-disposed soldiers' had burned down his house in Corve Street, and Thomas Vaughan complained that he could not collect his rent for his property in the Bull Ring 'without great hazard or danger to life.'[247] Several allegations were made by the residents of Corve Street in the town, about the 'Governor's soldiers' either causing damage to their property or demanding services for free.[248] John Evan made a complaint of theft of household goods, such as dishes, flagons and pots, through to a cupboard, side tables and bed linen, by an unnamed sergeant.[249] The burden placed upon the towns and other fortified areas for the billeting and maintenance of soldiers was considerable. In 1643-44 in Ludlow alone the figure for this came to £903 7s 10d, as at that time, the town was housing several troops of men under Colonels Herbert, Owens and Beamand and Captain Baldwyn.[250] Not only was there a burden on the town but also some inhabitants were owed considerable amounts for the quartering of soldiers, such as Owain Acton who petitioned for payment of the £16 15s 6d that he was owed.[251]

Some county collectors faced considerable opposition when trying to conduct their business, such as John Acton in Ludlow where the governor Michael Woodhouse had reacted violently towards him when the contributions were not collected in a timely fashion.[252] Woodhouse obviously thought that Acton

[244] *HV*, Part I, p.272.
[245] Phillips, 'Shrewsbury during the Civil War', pp.168-169.
[246] SA:3365/2641 unfoliated.
[247] SA:LB/8/1/168/1.
[248] SA:LB/7/2125.
[249] SA:LB/7/2174.
[250] SA:LB/7/2015.
[251] SA:LB/7/2066.
[252] SA:LB/7/2108.

was neglecting his duty, but as has already been seen, the appetite for war in Ludlow was low, and in November 1643 the townspeople had pleaded poverty when payments to the contribution fell short.[253] There was also discord in Shrewsbury concerning the collection of the assessments; constable Thomas Owen informed the authorities that when he went to 'take a discharge' from Michael Payne, he was assaulted, initially by Payne and his wife, and then by their maid who hit him in the mouth making it bleed.[254] It was not just individuals who balked at paying over large sums of money, as it was reported that in both Much Wenlock and Newport townspeople refused to accept warrants imposing the contribution and had taken it upon themselves to arrest the local collectors.[255]

The influx of Royalist troops, including many from Ireland, simply added to the county's burden. Troops from Ireland had started arriving in the country as reinforcements for the Royalist forces in October 1643, and by early spring of 1644 7,100 foot and 640 horse had arrived in mainland Britain. In February 1644 two infantry regiments from Leinster commanded by Colonel Henry Tillier were sent to Bridgnorth to reinforce to Prince Rupert's main field army.[256] The influx of extra soldiers was not popular with the local inhabitants simply because of the extra burden they placed on already extremely stretched resources. The parliamentary committee at Nantwich wrote to Sir William Brereton to inform him of the general poverty being experienced in the Whitchurch area, due to the free quartering of parliamentarian soldiers and plundering by royalist troops. This meant that the town's main income, which came from cheese trading, had been severely curtailed, and resulted in the ruin of many of the inhabitants.[257]Plundering was rife, not surprising given the fact that many soldiers were not paid properly, and even small hamlets such as Myddle saw thefts, for example an Irishman, Cornet Collins, decided to plunder the Chaloner household, throwing their mattress in the pond through spite. The Irish were particularly hated by the parliamentarians, and the murder of Irish soldiers became commonplace throughout the country. In Shropshire, around fifty Irish soldiers were captured when Shrewsbury was

[253] SA:LB/7/7/1932 and 1933.
[254] SA:3365/2641 unfoliated.
[255] *The Weekly Account,* 25 December 1644-1 January 1645.
[256] Mark Stoyle, *Strangers and Soldiers. An Ethnic History of the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p.58.
[257] R.N. Dore, *Brereton*, p.191.

taken by Parliament in 1644. The prisoners were forced to draw lots, and the thirteen who drew the short straws were unceremoniously hanged. Shortly afterwards, in retaliation, Prince Rupert hanged thirteen captured parliamentarian soldiers 'all on one crab-tree' on Bunbury Heath.[258]

Yet, during the war, administration of the county continued as before regarding the running of justice and poor relief. The constables of the parish still collected the relevant lewns, and made their presentments to the justices of the peace, and overseers made allotments to the needy poor. So far as religious observance was concerned, there were no bishop's visitations, but the constables of Shrewsbury still presented a list of those who had not observed Lent properly.[259] Shropshire was covered by three separate dioceses, Lichfield, Hereford and St Asaph, but diocesan control largely collapsed after all three bishops were impeached in August 1641 and were accused of treason in December 1641 for failing to sign the Declaration of Protestation.[260] Little money was spent on churches during that period, as many were used as shelter by either parliamentarian or royalist soldiers during various skirmishes. Many livings became vacant due to the allegiance of the incumbent, for it was practically impossible for Presbyterian, or more independently-minded ministers, to carry on as normal in a royalist-held county. As Auden has pointed out, in a rural county such as Shropshire, many practices would have either gone unnoticed or been accepted if they were unobtrusive, but some clergymen were ejected by the royalists. In February 1643, Sir Francis Ottley ordered his men to arrest George Baxter, the vicar of Little Wenlock since 1608, and described by Richard Baxter as a 'holy and reverend pastor,' for disaffection towards the crown, although he seems to have absented himself from his living anyway.[261]

[258] Gough, *History of Myddle*, pp.73-75.
[259] SA:3365/2241/90.
[260] *HJ*, Volume 4, pp.341,497.
[261] Ottley papers, *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VII (1895), pp.262-263. Sylvester, *Baxterianae*, Part 1, p.9. TNA: E331/HEREFORD/4.

Others who were imprisoned were Samuel Berkeley (Barkley), vicar of Clungunford, and Edward Lewis, vicar of Chirbury, both for displaying Puritan and parliamentarian sympathies, though how long they remained incarcerated is unclear. In fact, Berkeley was informed upon by his own parishioners. Both had been in their posts for several years, Berkeley having been appointed in 1630, and Lewis having been presented by the schoolmaster and bailiffs of Shrewsbury as being suitable for the living in 1629.[262] Even those with royalist patrons, such as Thomas Porter, who after the war was minister of Whitchurch, were often forced out. Porter had the living at Hanmer, just over the border in Flintshire, under the patronage of Sir Thomas Hanmer, but was 'forced to withdraw' during the conflict.[263] As the war progressed, and Parliament made gains, some royalist-leaning ministers were evicted from their livings. John Arnway was, according to Walker, forced out of Hodnet by men from the Wem garrison, and was replaced by a Francis Bowy and then a man called Peartree, who had apparently been a pedlar. Arnway joined the King at Oxford, but his books and papers were seized, and despite being made a doctor of divinity, he ended up in exile in Virginia.[264]

Parliament was determined to revise the whole ecclesiastical system and in July 1643 established the Westminster Assembly of Divines to lay plans. The representatives for Shropshire were William Pierrepoint and Samuel Hildersham, minister of West Felton. Auden has also included Humphrey Salwey, whom he described as coming from Ludlow, as a local representative. Yet, Humphrey Salloway/ Salwey came from Richard's Castle, which today is in Herefordshire, and seems to have had links with Worcestershire, as he was both a justice of the peace and MP for that county.[265] In fact it was William Spurstowe, MP for Shrewsbury, who was included (something that Neal failed to pick up on

[262] Auden, 'Ecclesiastical History,' *TSANHS*, 3rd Series, Volume VII (1907), pp.211-310, (p.250). BL. Add MS. 39534 (Dispensation rolls) and TNA: E331/HEREFORD/9 (Berkeley). *SPR*, Chirbury, Hereford Diocese, Volume VIII, p.viii (Lewis).

[263] Matthew Henry, *An Account of the life and death of Mr Philip Henry, Minister of the Gospel near Whitchurch in Shropshire* (Edinburgh, 1792), pp.220-221.

[264] John Walker, *The Sufferings of the Clergy of the Church of England during the Great Rebellion* reprinted (London: Wertheim, Macintosh and Hunt, 1863), p.42.

[265] Auden, 'Ecclesiastical History,' p.251. Daniel Neal, *The History of the Puritans or Protestant Non-Conformists from the Reformation in 1517 to the Revolution in 1688*, Volume II, revised edition (London, 1837), pp.208-209. John Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain*, Volume 1 (London, 1835), pp.152-153. (Salwey). *A & O*, Volume 1, pp.181-182.

as well). Hildersham seems to have kept his living throughout the war, only being ejected in 1662 after refusing to comply with the Act of Uniformity, which required the use of the Book of Common Prayer and the administration of the sacraments during worship.[266] The Solemn League and Covenant, agreed by Parliament and the Scots in 1643 as part of their alliance, involved every man over eighteen swearing that they would promote a reformed church and do their utmost to eradicate papacy and church government. Another edict that came out of the Westminster Assembly, and which was ratified by Parliament, was the removal of stone altars, communion tables and communion rails by 1 November 1643. How many parishes complied is unclear, due to many records being lost or destroyed, but it is known that St Julian's in Shrewsbury complied, even though it was under royalist rule, and Gough also suggested that Myddle dismantled its communion table and used the top as part of the chancel floor, once Parliament had secured the area.[267] On 23 August 1645, the Assembly issued the Directory for the Public Worship of God, replacing the Book of Common Prayer, the use of which was made illegal, and in June 1646 the classis system was established, which would replace the temporal powers of the Church.

The justice system also operated as before during the war, but not on such a regular basis, and the presiding justices of the peace consisted solely of those loyal to the crown. In Shrewsbury, the Quarter Sessions only sat in 1643 and 1644, although there are full accounts of the proceedings. In Ludlow, the Quarter Sessions sat between 1642 to 1644 and then again in 1646, but the archival evidence is extremely sparse, with only a handful of documents for each year. The bailiff's Court at Much Wenlock did sit on a regular basis, though it only dealt with civil matters of debt and trespass or damage to property; there is no evidence that the town's Quarter Sessions sat at all during that time. The justice system did not grind to a halt because of the war, people were still charged with offences, and there were many presentments for the illegal brewing and selling of ale. Most offences that appeared before the Shrewsbury Justices were burglary, theft, assault and affray, with many of the accused being committed to the House of Correction in Shrewsbury. However, there was the unusual case of Sarah

[266] Henry, *An Account,* p.223.
[267] SA: P256/B/2/1 (St Julian's churchwarden accounts). Gough, *History of Myddle,* p.19.

Cropper, also known as Pugh, who, in October 1643, had been caught wearing men's apparel, for which she was convicted and sent away from the town.[268]

Despite the general disruption of the war, the constables made their presentments from the liberties with the common refrain that 'all was good and fair' within their particular township, apart from the more colourful response of the constable of Bicton, who, in 1644, declared that there had 'been no murders robberies felonies bloodshed nor other misdemeanours committed within our township', before going on to present Griffith Rees, Richard Mylland and John Evans for the illegal selling of ale.[269] In the township of Acton Reynald in 1643, the constable Thomas Whitcherley presented John Huffa, a husbandman of Clive, to the Justices for disloyalty to the crown and siding with the enemy on several counts. In a misdated document, the constable alleged that Huffa not only refused to join the royalist trained bands and pay his lewns, but had also called Francis Ottley a tinker's swine, and travelled on a Sunday from parish to parish exhorting others to provide funds for Parliament. It was also alleged that he had offered (subject to a warrant being granted) to detain Sir Paul Harris and Sir Vincent Corbet and bring them before the assembly. One of the witnesses to his crimes was Dame Elizabeth Corbet, but it is not clear what happened to Huffa in the end.[270]

In fact, illegal ale selling was the most common offence seen by the Shrewsbury Justices, and even the presentments from the liberties revealed several offenders, although it must be said that in 1643 and 1644, there were far fewer such miscreants than in later years. Whether that was due to extra vigilance by the local constables, which was a warning to would-be offenders, or that officials had more important things to worry about is not clear. In 1643-44 there were thirty-four presentments from the liberties of Shrewsbury and only twenty-two people were summoned for the offence. Shrewsbury had more offences reported, with eight illegal ale sellers, and five illegal maltsters were reported by the constable for Castle Foregate.[271] On 22 January 1644 constables William Cartwright and William Day of the

[268] SA:3365/2241/4.
[269] SA:3365/2241/48.
[270] SA:3365/2241/101-103.
[271] SA:3365/2241/59.

Welsh ward reported eighty-two illegal ale sellers there. A few days later, on 25 January, the same constables further reported twenty illegal maltsters in the ward.[272] It was an offence to manufacture or sell ale without the appropriate consent from at least two justices of the peace. Legally to set up an ale or tippling house, a bond of recognizance with surety had to be given in an open session of the justices upon payment of five marks, with a pledge that no illegal games would be played on the premises and that it would be kept in an orderly fashion. The penalty for illegal ale selling was three days in gaol and a forfeiture of 20s for the poor of the parish (the alternative for those who could not pay being a public whipping). For a second offence, the punishment increased to one month's imprisonment in the House of Correction.[273] Yet the brewing and selling of ale at home was not simply a social problem encouraging the excess consumption of alcohol, as for many it was a vital source of income and both the offence and the offenders tended to recur every year.

Overall, we have seen that the outbreak and waging of the civil war strained loyalties and allegiances throughout the country, not only amongst communities, but also, in certain instances, on a familial level. There were extended families such as the Corbets who held vastly different political opinions, and in Shrewsbury loyalties were divided amongst those who had previously worked closely together administering the town's affairs. Yet there were also pockets of the county, particularly in the south-west, where people, eventually worn down by the depredations of war, became 'aggressively' neutral and took a protectionist stance in an attempt at self-preservation. It is also apparent from consideration of the surviving archival evidence that many individuals and communities were reluctant to involve themselves in the war at all and simply tried not to alienate either side of the conflict. This passive style of allegiance did not really work, certainly on a financial level, as, during the war, demands were made or goods seized whatever side the locals were on, and, as will be seen after the war, there were further financial consequences for many. Yet the day-to-day administration of the county continued as best it could in trying times; the justice system still worked, albeit infrequently, the needy poor and maimed soldiers of the parish were still maintained, and religious observances were upheld by many. It was only

[272] SA:3365/2241/49-50
[273] Michael Dalton, *The Countrey Justice* (London, 1677), pp.30-31.

after the end of the war that the real damage, both financial and personal, could be assessed, and, as will become clear, it would take some time to put things back on an even keel with a further change of personnel in charge of county governance.

# Chapter 3

## Reaction, Reorganization and Repercussions, 1646-1653

Yet let's be content, and the times lament, you see the world turned upside down[1]

### Local Issues and Events

The devastating consequences of the first, and most brutal, of the wars were felt throughout the country, and not just on a societal level. Shropshire was no different, the fighting having left behind it a trail of destruction, financial penury for many and personal rifts within some families. It was only after the fall of Ludlow in spring 1646 that there was full parliamentary control over the county, yet, as with most uprisings, the reorganization of government, both local and central, was not an easy or simple process. There was a long delay between Charles's surrender to the Scots at Southwell in May 1646 and his eventual trial and execution in 1648-9. In between there were lengthy negotiations trying to avoid what was becoming increasingly inevitable, given the lack of common ground and sensibilities. The country still had to function effectively, however, and just because the status of the monarchy was in doubt, this did not mean that the state could remain in limbo, nor that those still loyal to the King did not actively seek his release. This period saw both an escape attempt and further warfare as royalists attempted to

[1] Anonymous, *The World is Turned Upside Down*, Ballad (1646) - a popular ballad, aimed at Puritanism and sung to the tune of *When the King Enjoys His Own Again.*

wrest the throne back. It has been estimated that over sixty-two thousand people died in the first war, and not only were crops and animal stocks devastated, but around one hundred and fifty towns sustained substantial damaged, with the border counties having borne much of the action.[2] Parliament therefore, not only had to cope with numerous petitions and pleas for reparations, but it also introduced new financial ordinances under which each county had to contribute towards the costs that had been incurred during the first war, as well as maintaining sufficient troops to ensure the peace of the country in the future. Initially, the format of government remained the same, apart from the fact that there was now no ultimate recourse to the crown. Furthermore, after the abolition of the House of Lords in March 1649, all power then rested with the House of Commons, who established a variety of both central and local committees to investigate, report, and respond to certain issues.[3] This chapter will assess not only how Shropshire dealt with the change in the style of governance and worship during this period, but also how it contributed to the finances of the country, as well as trying to rebuild its own infrastructure. The dates of 1646 to 1653, from the fall of Ludlow through to the founding of the Protectorate, have been used as rough parameters for this chapter; however, not all events and developments, particularly the sequestration of estates, fall neatly within these years and so the timeline is fluid.

The high death toll sustained in the first war was reflected at a local level, and although there are no concrete figures available, the reflections of Richard Gough do illustrate that the figures must have been high. He estimated that out of the twenty men from Newto[w]n, Marton and Myddle who had gone to war, thirteen had died, or certainly never returned to the locality.[4] Given that these settlements could only be classified as villages at best, more like hamlets, then that is a high proportion of the male population if rolled out county-wide. Some civilians were also caught up in the mayhem. Richard Creswell of Bridgnorth reported that his wife had been imprisoned by Sir Lewis Kirke for six months upon suspicion of providing information to Parliament, and during her incarceration had been 'put to exquisite and unutterable torment, with twisted cords, screws and fire, until her nail and flesh was bored

[2] Austin Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.335-338.
[3] *A & O,* Volume I, p.24.
[4] Gough, *History of Myddle*, pp.39-40.

through, and the marrow fired out of the bones.'[5] Considerable physical damage to buildings was also a consequence of the conflict, with perhaps Bridgnorth coming off the worst. The town, which was held by royalists, had held out until the bitter end, and when the parliamentarian soldiers were closing in, a fire was set close to the garrisoned castle. Unfortunately, it spread and devastated much of the High Town, leaving people homeless and having to shelter 'in the fields around the town, in thickets and under rocks: all their household property destroyed, and their life itself in jeopardy.'[6] The Court Leet book notes that not only was the castle burnt out, but the High Town church (St Leonard's) had also been damaged by fire. It had been used as an ammunition store by the royalists, which had contributed to the blaze, but it had also housed the 'Treasury cofer', which was completely destroyed.[7] The town petitioned Parliament for aid in 1648, complaining that the damage caused had amounted to £90,000, 'to the utter Ruin of above Three hundred families.'[8] Parliament agreed to this, but the money was a long time coming, so in the meantime the burgesses and other town officials sent begging letters to rich London merchants and others outside the county, whom they hoped would provide aid. Finally, Lady Bartue of Much Wenlock allowed them materials from an old barn to build a new Town Hall.[9]

Other acts of destruction were deliberate and direct, leaving what had formerly been palatial mansions derelict. Such was the case with Apley castle, which originally belonged to the Charlton family, but during this period was in the care of Thomas Hanmer, who had married Francis Charlton's widow. It was garrisoned for the crown under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Honer, who ill-used the property and surrounding lands to such an extent that Hanmer, who had allegedly spent £6,000 on refurbishments, complained to the commissioners of Array. The complaint resulted in his arrest for High Treason, and he was detained until he agreed to maintain the property and hold it for the crown at his own expense. Shortly afterwards, it was seized by Parliament, whose troops caused £1,500-worth of damage in the process, but was swiftly regained by the crown, whose soldiers promptly sequestered

[5] *CCC*, Part 3, p.1641.
[6] George Bellett, *The Antiquities of Bridgnorth* (London: Longmans Green, 1856), p.170.
[7] SA:BB/F/1/1/3 fol.659.
[8] SA:BB/C/4/4/1, and *CJ*, Volume 5, pp.424-425.
[9] Bellett, *Bridgnorth*, pp.188-191.

£3-4,000-worth of goods, took away the lead to reroof Shrewsbury castle and then demolished the rest of the building, so that it would be of no further use to Parliament.[10] It was not just the royalists who carried out such acts. Sir Vincent Corbet's house at Moreton Corbet, seized and garrisoned by Parliament, under the command of Roger Fenwicke, was 'deserted… and burnt by the p'liamt partie' after the capture of Shrewsbury.[11] Yet, other property was saved, if it was felt to be expedient. Upon the taking of High Ercall, the local Defence Committee wanted to demolish it to prevent its further use, but the Derby House Committee ordered it simply to drain the moat, which the Newports had agreed to, for if all houses that were capable of being regarrisoned be pulled down, 'there would be too many sad marks left of the calamity of this war.'[12]

It was not just the destruction of property that was a blow to the populace. There had been years of assessments and taxation (some entirely involuntary) by both sides, crops had been devastated and animals, particularly horses, stolen. Baxter noted that both his father and his Puritan neighbours, who apparently did not support either side, were 'plundered by the King's soldiers, so that some of them had almost nothing but lumber left in their houses.'[13] Trade had been substantially depressed particularly during the later war years when free movement of goods became difficult, especially those items that used the Severn as a conduit, and in general the county was far worse off in 1646 than it was in 1642. The only people who seemed to profit, or at least make a living, were the tradesmen who had been involved in the erection and maintenance of the town defences. A good supply of stone was particularly vital, with much coming from Edward Jones's quarry at Emstree (Emstrey) just outside Shrewsbury. In October 1644 alone, Thomas Harris, a cessor for the Stone Ward of the town in 1644, authorised a payment of £468 17s 5d to Jones.[14] Another great expense to the town was for gunpowder work, which

[10] Eliza Stackhouse Acton, *The Garrisons of Shropshire during the Civil War, 1642-1648* (Shrewsbury, 1867), pp.23-25.
[11] J. Hall, ed., *Memorials of the Civil War in Cheshire and Adjacent Counties by Thomas Malbon of Nantwich, gent.* (Manchester: The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, XIX, 1889). J.E Auden, 'Three Mytton Letters', *TSANHS*, 3rd Series, Volume IX (1909), pp.287-308, (p.291).
[12] *CSPD*, Charles I, 1645-7, pp.402-403.
[13] Matthew Sylvester, *Reliquiae Baxterianae or Mr Richard Baxter's Narrative of the most Memorable Passages of his life and times* (London, 1696), p.44.
[14] William Phillips, 'Shrewsbury during the Civil War of Charles I', *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume X (1898), pp.157-172, (p.166). SA:3365/588/36.

cost £177 7d in 1643-44.[15] The person who was perhaps the busiest during the war years was the coroner. His duties were mainly concerned with *inquisitions post mortem* upon sudden deaths, and in 1643-44 the Shrewsbury coroner was paid £468 17s 11d, a figure that had dropped to £153 13s 4d when Mayor Richard Llewellin, prepared his accounts in 1647.[16]

In the immediate post-wars years those now in control of the county concentrated on making sure that all administrative systems, both old and new, ran smoothly. Military events that were occurring in the outside world had little impact on the county, and it remained relatively untouched by the second civil war. However, there was a definite air of fear and mistrust, and defensive preparations were made. In spring 1647, the Shrewsbury corporation directed that those who had been ordered to leave the town through their disaffection should not be allowed back, and asked Parliament to consider that they be allowed £1,000 from any delinquent's estates to go towards the 'makinge of strong stone walls about the towne' in case of any further uprisings.[17] Presumably this was in response to the fact that the whole county, including Ludlow, was to be de-garrisoned, and any defensive works put on hold, except for Shrewsbury castle, which was to remain fortified, with a company of one hundred troops.[18] The local committee obviously thought that central government was being premature, and, as it turned out, it was right. On 5 June 1647, the day after Cornet Joyce had seized the King from Holdenby House on behalf of the army, Mackworth wrote to fellow committee members suggesting that a nightly guard be kept on the town, and that the magazine and ordnance be sent to Ludlow for safe keeping, as that town's defences were more secure. Furthermore, all arms in the county were to be seized and held until the danger was over, no-one should be allowed to sell gunpowder without the express permission of the committee, and any delinquents who had not compounded should be incarcerated. His correspondence suggests that he did not agree with the army's actions, for 'if the Parliament of England bee likely to suffer violence, I think our lives and estates are not to deere to spend in that quarrel where and whenever

[15] SA:3365/588/2 and 3365/588/18.
[16] S.A:3365/588/2 and 3365/594/1.
[17] *HoS*, Volume I, p.462.
[18] *CJ*, Volume 5, 1646-48, p.98.

soe be the opponents.'[19] Yet an anonymous pamphlet, entitled *A Narration of the business at Shrewsbury, called by some the raging of a New Warr*, was circulated, which seemed to indicate that it was the townspeople, not the local committee, who urged that the town defend itself as the 'cavaliers grew very bold and insolent.' The tract also asserted that it was the men of the town who suggested suitable candidates for captains of the watch, who soon became disheartened as the committee would not let them impress men into service or give them access to the keys to the town. Eventually, several of 'the chiefe men' approached the governor to suggest that the magazine and ordnance be moved for safety reasons, but received a 'dilatory answer, soe nothing was donne upon it, nor any further moving in the business.' Whichever version was right, it was apparent that, as far from the capital as the county was, both the local administration and the populace were aware of troubled times ahead, including the 'cavalliers rising in some parts of Wales.' On 25 June 1647, the committee ordered that the town be 'put in a posture of defence', and that captains John Prowde, Adam Webb, John Betton and Charles Doughty provide a list of all men fit to bear arms and to repair the damaged town walls where necessary. A couple of weeks later it ordered that Mayor Richard Llewellin, Rowland Hunt, John Lowe and Captain Betton send twenty barrels of gunpowder out of the castle along with matches, bullets and four hundred muskets and pikes for the use of the townspeople.[20]

The summer of 1648 saw the promise of further trouble, both in Wales and up and down the Marches. The Derby House Committee, acting on information received from Sir Robert Harley, wrote to the governors of Shrewsbury and Ludlow on 17 July 1648, warning them of a potential threat, and asking them to ensure that the castles 'not be surprised by malignants.'[21] On 4 August, Mackworth had petitioned the committee for 250 extra men to strengthen the Shrewsbury garrison, and £200 to effect repairs to the town's defences.[22] The following day, he wrote to his fellow commissioner William Pierrepoint in London, describing a royalist plot to take Shrewsbury and the suburbs that had been foiled by the local militia led by Captain Allen, Colonel Andrew Lloyd and Colonel Samuel More, who had

[19] *HoS,* Volume I, p.463.
[20] *Ibid.,* pp.463-464.
[21] *CSPD,* Charles I, 1648-9, pp.195,197,233.
[22] *Ibid.,* p.233.

routed the conspirators, including Sir Thomas Harris of Boreatton, son of Sir Paul who had died in 1644, and his step-mother (described by Mackworth as his mother-in-law) Anne. The plan, which had been drawn up by Lord Byron, was for the local men to rendezvous on Wattlesborough Heath just west of Shrewsbury, march north to meet up with Byron and his men on Prees Heath, and then turn back south to take the town. The meeting at Wattlesborough was disrupted, and many were detained, whilst Byron had fled to Wales. The town was secure, which was as well, for, as Mackworth pointed out, the 'Out-works of the Castle are yet down, the Castle unvictualed, and without Beds, and many Defects.'[23] The same month, *A New Rising of Divers Knights, Gentlemen, Collonels, Gentlemen and others for the King* suggested that there was a plot for the loyalists in Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire and Shropshire to join together and take Hereford, Dawley castle and Basil Brooke's house at Madeley in order to garrison them for the crown.[24] On 18 August the Derby House Committee ordered that the Worcestershire county committee, along with those of Gloucestershire, Shropshire, Monmouthshire and Herefordshire join forces to suppress the potential uprising being occasioned by Colonel Lingen, and fellow royalist sympathisers, who had seized Hampton Court, just south of Leominster, 'before they cause greater inconvenience to the public.' The Shropshire committee was also ordered to help Colonel Samuel More secure Montgomery castle, until it could be garrisoned as it was 'a place of so great consequence.'[25] Francis Ottley was named as being part of the plot, which was foiled by Captain Yarrington, governor of Hartlebury castle, and his men. Some of the insurgents were killed and others imprisoned at Shrewsbury and Ludlow.[26] Yarrington was later rewarded with £500 for his actions, which was to be paid out of Lingen's sequestered estates.[27] There is no evidence of any firm moves made by that royalist group in Shropshire, and certainly Ottley was not detained upon suspicion of any involvement, although Dawley and Broncroft castles were ordered to be demolished to prevent any further action.[28]

[23] *HJ*, Volume 10, pp.424-425.
[24] Anon, *A New Rising of Divers gentleman* (London, 1648). J.E. Auden, 'Sir Francis Ottley and the Royalist attempt of 1648', *TSANHS*, 4th Series, Volume II (1912), pp. 293-295.
[25] *Ibid.,* pp.235-236.
[26] *CJ*, Volume 5, 1646-48, p.566.
[27] *Ibid.,* p.642.
[28] *Ibid.,* p.631.

At the end of 1648, Pride's Purge meant that the county was stripped of many of its representatives, but, the day before that happened, an ordinance was passed to settle the militia in the county. The usual committee members were appointed, and were joined by new names such as William Jones, William Littleton of Little Wenlock, who left £10 to the poor of Ludlow in his will of 1653, and doctor Nathaniel Wright of Shrewsbury.[29] It was simply different personnel responding to parliamentary ordinances, but in religious matters many ministers lost their livings and were replaced by those thought to be more suitable, and on a personal level many who had supported the crown paid heavily for their loyalty. Surprisingly there appears to have been no obvious adverse reaction to the execution of the King in January 1649, within the county at least. That is not to say that there were no royalist sympathisers in the locality, as the 1650s would prove to be fraught with potential uprisings, but in the direct aftermath of the death of the King the county carried on as before, while those in official positions kept a vigilant eye out for any malignant actions.

The only incident of note that took place in 1649 did not involve any royalists, but a group of ordinary people, some of whom supported Parliament. Captain Lumley Thelwall and his troop were travelling through the county on their way to Ireland via Chester, when they were set upon by a 'tumultuous multitude crowd, led by Colonel Clive,' presumably Robert Clive of Styche near Market Drayton, the MP for Bridgnorth.[30] According to Thelwall, he and his troops were accused of being rebels and traitors 'for being in the service of Parliament,' and their horses were seized and sold on the open market.[31] Why they would be declared traitors by Clive is unknown, as he was a strong parliamentarian and long-standing member of the local committee. Auden postulates that it was due to the troopers' behaviour when they quartered in the area, and the attack was really an opportunity to recoup some of the local community's losses rather than for any political motive. Thelwall, a Denbighshire man from Plas Coch, was very young to have been a captain; he had only been admitted to Shrewsbury School nine years

[29] *A & O*, Volume 1, pp.1233-1234,1242-1243. SA:LB/7/7/1777.
[30] *Ibid*., p.79.
[31] *Ibid.,* p.282.

before, and so would have been in his early twenties at best. He, perhaps, was not in control of his troops as was appropriate, so, to cover up any dishonourable behaviour, he spun an alternative tale.[32] Certainly Clive does not seem to have been censured by Parliament, even though he was called to account for his actions, but Thomas Church of Betton and Robert Deakins of Rugerdine (Wrockwardine?) were ordered to enter into recognizances of £500, to be of best behaviour, about the attack.[33] Another possible explanation, is that this event occurred a few months after Pride's Purge, and Clive had absented himself Parliament, so at that time been could well have become disenchanted, and Thelwall became the target for derision and abuse.

Throughout 1650 there was still an air of unease, particularly in the summer. After signing the Treaty of Breda in May, Charles Stuart landed in Scotland the following month. The Council of State issued directions for governor Mackworth to be wary of anyone who was using seditious words to stir up the populace, and eject them from the garrison.[34] One such disaffected person was Mr Cook, a minister of Drayton. The precise details of his offence are not known, but on 26 September 1649 Captain Lumley Thelwall and William Wenlock laid informations against him for contempt of Parliament and for preaching a treasonous sermon.[35] Cook was elusive, however, and so on 16 October 1650, the Council of State issued a warrant for his arrest 'for speaking treason and other crimes and misdemeanours', and ordered Mackworth and the rest of the Militia Committee to apprehend him and bring him before the High Court.[36] Mackworth had already been carrying out preventative measures, and was praised for his actions. He was encouraged by the Council to carry on in his work, which included opening people's correspondence if necessary, to ensure the peace of both the county and the Commonwealth.[37] He had also requested that a company of foot be stationed in the county, which was being looked upon favourably.[38] There were no uprisings or rebellions that year, either within or outside the county borders,

[32] J.E. Auden, 'Shropshire and the Royalist Conspiracies between the end of the first Civil War and the Restoration,' *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume X (1898), pp.87-168, (pp.113-114).
[33] *Ibid.*, pp.524-525.
[34] *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1650, p.290.
[35] BL: Stowe MSS 184, ff.156,168.
[36] *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1649-1650, pp.549,475.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 150.
[38] *CSPD*, 1649-1650, p.503.

but several county men were granted commissions. In April 1650, Roger Evans was made captain of a troop of horse, whilst Thomas Mackworth was made a colonel, and William Crowne, Edward Cresset, William Incks (Hinks/Jinks?), Richard Hennage, Robert Alleyne, and Charles Langford became captains of companies of foot. William Brayne (or Braine) was made a major of a company of foot under Humphrey Mackworth that month, and Crowne and Jinks were promoted to lieutenant-colonel and major respectively in August that year.[39]

In any event, Shropshire had more than enough to contend with, coping with the plague that struck the county that year. Apart from isolated cases mainly in the south-west of the country, the county was the only area in England badly affected by the disease in 1650.[40] In Shrewsbury the infected were taken to the pest house, which was either at Cadogan's Chapel in Frankwell, or an alternative building fairly close by at Kingsland.[41] The first site was used for such a purpose in 1604, when the building was rented by the corporation who had it repaired and put to use for eighteen months.[42] Whether it was still habitable by 1650 is unclear, as it was situated near to, or was in fact part of, Cadogan's Fort, which was a civil war battery erected by Lord Capel.[43] The *Shropshire Parish Register* suggests that it was used, but the corporation had also ordered the repair of the pest house at Kingsland, possibly in 1650, and certainly in 1656.[44] An entry in *A Perfect Diurnall* from Shrewsbury on 8 July reported that there was no contagion yet, and the soldiers had been ordered to return to the castle, as the 'plaigue bugun in Shrowsbure the 12 June 1650 in Frankwell at John Conie's howse.'[45] The Council of State, worried about the soldiers at the Shrewsbury garrison, directed that the infected houses around the castle and the town gates be cleared out, and that the school be closed for the duration.[46] The problem was still ongoing in September, by which time six or seven households had been struck down, but the garrison

[39] *CSPD*, Interregnum,1650, pp.505-506,509.
[40] J.D. Shrewsbury, *A History of the Bubonic Plague in the British Isles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p.435.
[41] *SPR*: Diocese of Lichfield, Volume XV, St. Chad's Shrewsbury, Volume 1 (Shropshire Parish Register Society, 1913), pp. xxii.
[42] *HoS*, Volume II, p.466.
[43] SCC HER Number (PRN) 01487. *HoS*, Volume I, p.436.
[44] SCC HER Number (PRN) 01499. SA:3365/603/62.
[45] *A Perfect Diurnall*, 8-15 July 1650. SA:6001/275.
[46] *HoS*, Volume I, p.465.

was still clear, which was a good job as the militia had 'divers disaffected persons under restraint, which cools the rest in their blind zeale.'[47] Two hundred and thirty six people died in slightly over six months in St Chad's parish alone as a result of the epidemic, the last burial being recorded on 16 January 1651. St Mary's noted twelve definite, and two possible, deaths during that time, and St Julian's recorded twenty-one deaths, fifteen of whom came from four separate families, and although it is not specifically noted that the plague was the cause, it is a reasonable supposition.[48] By 21 November it was estimated that there were two hundred residents in the pest house, many of whom were recovering sufficiently to be allowed home, and in the winter months the progress of the disease definitely slowed.[49] The only other area affected on a large scale was Whitchurch, possibly because it was on a major route between Shrewsbury and Chester which increased exposure to any infection. The first incident was recorded on 2 August of that year, and two hundred and seventeen deaths were recorded up to March 1651.[50] Most deaths occurred in September, October and November, and in 1650, sixty per cent of recorded mortalities were plague-related. It affected women more than men, and the deaths were concentrated in the High Street, where the market was held, and one of its offshoots, Pepper Street.[51]

Only a few months later, the county was in turmoil again, as Charles Stuart moved south to regain the throne. He marched out of Scotland on 1 August 1651 with around thirteen thousand troops under the command of General Leslie. The same day, the Council of State ordered that Mackworth, along with Colonels Birch and Duckenfield, the governors of Liverpool and Chester respectively, raise ten new troops of militia, six of which were to march to Scotland and the rest to stay within the county to maintain the garrisons.[52] On 14 August, Mytton was ordered to return to the county to raise a troop of horse and some foot.[53] The county was, therefore, prepared for the invasion. *A Perfect Diurnall* reported

[47] *A Perfect Diurnall*, 2-9 September 1651, p.451.
[48] *Ibid.*, pp.210-222 and SA:6001/275. *SPR*: Diocese of Lichfield, Volume XII, St Mary's Shrewsbury (1911), pp. 110-111, SA: P257 Fiche 101-113. *HoS*, Volume I, p.466.
[49] *A Perfect Diurnall*, 18-25 November 1651.
[50] SA:6001/2345 – Shrewsbury Public Library Manuscripts, Whitchurch Records, pp.171-180.
[51] Sylvia Watts, 'Some Aspects of Mortality in Three Shropshire Parishes in the Mid-Seventeenth Century', *Local Population Studies*, 67 (2001), pp.22-23.
[52] *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1651, pp.320-321.
[53] *Ibid.*, p.330.

that Ludlow had strengthened the garrison and was speedily raising local forces to repel the royalists, and Shrewsbury was sending out scouts to gain information. In the meantime it had 'provided for the security of this place, which is so considerable as it is the Key to Wales' and hoped to join up with neighbouring counties 'to do what we are able by breaking Bridges, or diverting their course if they march this way.'[54] Charles arrived in Shropshire later that month, travelling through Whitchurch, Market Drayton and Newport, before finally setting up camp on Tong Heath on 20 August.[55] From there he wrote to Mackworth as 'a gentleman of an ancient house, and of very different principals (as I am informed) from those with whom your employment ranks you at present,' requesting that he peaceably surrender the town on whatever conditions he specified, and, in return, he would not only receive future rewards, but a pardon and protection for himself and his family for past deeds done. The accompanying summons referred to the necessity to surrender 'as in duty and allegiance, by the laws of God and the land'. Mackworth politely refused the offer, replying to the effect that as a gentleman he kept his word, and was true to Parliament as ever, so no threats or inducements could persuade him to surrender the town, for 'I resolve to be found as I am, unremovable, the faithful servant of the Commonwealth of England.'[56] Charles did not press the matter further and moved on to Worcester, arriving on 22 August. On 26 August Cromwell granted a standing Commission of Court Martial to appropriate officers in Lancashire, Shropshire, Cheshire and North Wales, to try offenders in the developing rebellion,[57] and two days later Mackworth was granted £100 for his garrison.[58]

As for Charles's supporters, relatively few Englishmen joined his march south; the northerners hated the Scots, many of the royalists in Lancashire, under the direction of the Earl of Derby, whose support had been guaranteed, had been arrested, alongside other supporters throughout the country, and those that remained at large had been routed by Colonel Robert Lilburne during the battle of Wigan on 25 August. In the event, the multitude that had been expected to join Charles at Worcester had faded

[54] *A Perfect Diurnall*, 18-25 August 1651, pp.1253,1256.
[55] J E Auden, 'Charles II and Tong', *TSANHS*, 3rd series, Volume VII (1907), pp.177-192, (p.177).
[56] Thomas Phillips, *The History and Antiquities of Shrewsbury*, Volume 1, (Shrewsbury, 1837), pp.42-43.
[57] *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1651, p.372.
[58] *Ibid.*, p.382.

away.[59] He did have some support in the county; Lord Francis Talbot of Albrighton and Longford raised a troop of sixty horse which was commanded by Major William Careless from Bromhall, who had been at one-time governor of Tong. The troop also contained Captain Charles Giffard of Whiteladies, his servant trooper Francis Yates from Brewood (who was later executed at Oxford for aiding Charles's escape and failing to tell the authorities of his whereabouts) and Richard Walker, a scout master. They were joined by the former parliamentarian soldiers Captain John Benbow and Cornet Kinnersley, son of Hercules Kinnersley, a strong parliamentarian from Cleobury North.[60]

After the battle of Worcester, Charles and his supporters needed a haven and they found one in eastern Shropshire, where they were sheltered and aided by a clutch of Catholic landed families and their servants. These included the Gifford family of Whiteladies and their tenants the Pendrills who farmed at Hubbal Grange.[61] At one point Richard Pendrill sought the help of George Mainwaring, possibly formerly the captain who had overseen the Tong garrison, at Wolverhampton to work out an escape route. Eventually Charles did manage to get away from the county and the country into exile on the Continent, though some of his key supporters, including the Earl of Derby and John Benbow, were captured within Shropshire. Many of the Scottish prisoners were also housed in Shropshire churches awaiting transportation to the plantations.[62] After Charles had got away, his hideouts at both Boscobel and Whiteladies were thoroughly searched, but nothing found, the occupants denying all knowledge of the Prince's presence. William Pendrill was still under suspicion, however, and was summonsed twice to Shrewsbury where he was questioned by 'Captain Fox and Lluellin, a sequestrator', believed to be John Llewellyn of Drayton.[63] Derby and Benbow were prosecuted at the High Court at Chester before Mackworth, who was President of the Court, Colonel Mytton and Captain Vincent Corbet.[64] This was presumably Sir John Corbet's second son, but this is not clear; both Auden and Augusta Corbet have

[59] Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution,* p.495.
[60] Sylvester, *Baxterianae,* p.68.
[61] Auden, 'Charles II and Tong', p.178.
[62] *Ibid.,* p.188.
[63] *Ibid.,* p.187.
[64] William Cobbett, *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials,* Volume 5 (London, 1810), pp.294-324, (p.295).

described him as being of Adderley, yet Cobbett makes no mention of this in the trial transcript. It was a swift trial and the verdict was never in doubt, as the Council of State had already ordered that Mackworth and the rest of the trial commissioners make an example of Benbow and try him and the others 'as speedily and effectually as you can.'[65] The defendants were both found guilty of corresponding with Charles Stuart and his party contrary to an ordinance on 12 August 1651.[66] Derby was executed at Bolton, and Benbow was shot on the green under the Castle Mount at Shrewsbury on 15 October, and buried at St Chad's the following day.[67] Several of the Catholic landed families, including the Pendrills, and other servants and lesser men in Shropshire who had also aided Charles, suffered both financially and personally for their support and, according to later petitions, were left in reduced circumstances or destitution during the 1650s. After the restoration, many sought financial support from Charles II, including members of the Pendrill, Yates and Burd families, and some were eventually successful in gaining pensions or exemption from prosecution as recusants.[68]

It is obvious from the actions of some residents of Tong and its environs that there were pockets of support for Charles Stuart within the county, mainly from Catholic families, but what is surprising is that those members of the gentry who had fought in the first war for the father did not get involved in the son's cause. By that stage those that had been imprisoned had been released; Sir Richard Lee of Langley who had been put under house arrest was described as being ill and infirm in April 1648, and Francis Newport had been discharged upon his own security of £1,000, and those of two sureties of £5,000, and had been ordered to live with Lady Brooke in Hackney.[69] Mackworth was aware of the situation, and by the end of August, Newport was back in Shropshire on his own recognisance of £5,000 and to be of good behaviour.[70] Newport was not one to obey Parliament, as was seen in his dealings with the Compounding Committee, and so it is surprising that he made no attempt to help Charles Stuart

[65] *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1651, pp.455-458.
[66] *A & O*, Volume 2, p.550.
[67] *HoS*, Volume I, pp.468-469.
[68] *CSPD*, Charles II, 1660-1661, pp. ii-iii; *CSPD*, Charles II, 1670, pp.141, 267. William Shaw, ed., *Calendar of Treasury Books*, Volume 1, pp.534, 655; Volume 4, 1672-75, pp.iii, 756-758; Volume 8, 1685-89, p.716.
[69] *CSPD*, Charles I, 1648-49, p.46. *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1650, p.203.
[70] *Ibid.*, p.306.

a year later. Perhaps he realised it was a doomed situation, or was simply jaded with the war and its after-effects. His father, who had fled to France at the end of the first war, was dead, as was Sir Francis Ottley, who had died in 1649. Sir Vincent Corbet, although he was only in his mid-thirties, was enmeshed with family financial affairs brought about through the sequestration of his estates, and this seems to be the case with many other gentry families.[71] As to the other young bloods of the county, they were also quiet during this period, but some would try and act against Cromwell and Parliament in later years. Perhaps, the lack of reaction by the gentry reflected their apathy towards conflict in general, particularly in financially straightened times.

The final two years of the Commonwealth passed in relative peace, and daily life carried on as normal for most people. Those of means who had supported the crown were still negotiating with the Compounding Committee over their lands, as well as trying to recoup their losses, and in any event no longer took any part in the administration of the county, which was now undertaken by a much smaller group of men who were generally of lesser social standing. At the base level of administration, namely the parish and the hundred, the personnel generally did not change, apart from through natural causes. The constables and churchwardens still came from their local community, and even in most of the towns, those with the power over finances did not alter substantially. They were all ultimately responsible to the local committees, who cascaded the central ordinances down for implementation. The rule of Parliament was never going to please everyone, particularly as assessments still had to be paid despite the devastation wrought by the war, and the run of crop failures that had occurred since the mid-1640s. All such taxation was now not only collected, but administered, at a local level, and had to cover, not only the normal running costs of the county, but also the extra costs of maintaining the increasingly large number of maimed soldiers, the remaining garrisons and militia, and the money for the quartering and back-pay of soldiers. As will be discussed later, the amounts that were being asked for both by central government and the county, and the local towns and parishes by way of lewns

[71] TNA: SP23/192/692.

increased throughout the period, to repair and reconstruct the county's infrastructure whilst carrying out their duty to the poor and unfortunate of the county.

## Changes in Personnel

At the level of county governance and within central parliamentary spheres, the administrative and representative personnel of the county changed dramatically. Prior to 1645 most MPs had supported the crown, with only Pierrepoint for Much Wenlock, Spurstowe for Shrewsbury, Sir John Corbet for the shire and More for Bishop's Castle being clear parliamentarians. In the early months of the war those who had supported the crown had been excluded from Westminster, so when the conflict finally ended there were a significant number of vacancies in Parliament. In Shropshire, mainly local men were chosen to fill the vacant seats, which included those of Richard More and William Spurstowe who had died in 1643 and 1646 respectively. The only outsider was William Masham, who was elected as MP for Shrewsbury in 1646 to replace Spurstowe, a draper with Cheshire roots, who, after settling in Shrewsbury, seems to have conducted most of his business in London, where he was described as a merchant. Spurstowe had been an active MP for the town, and had sat on twenty-three committees in the Long Parliament, including that for scandalous ministers. Masham, in contrast, was an Essex man with no obvious links to the county, but he was the eldest son of Sir William Masham who sat on the Council of State and was apparently a second cousin of Cromwell, so perhaps outside influences encouraged the election of this recruiter MP.[72] Masham's fellow MP for the town was Thomas Hunt, who had served on the local committee from its inception in April 1643.

[72] H.T. Weyman, 'Members of Parliament for Shrewsbury', *TSANHS*, 4th series, Volume XII (1933-4), pp.113-172, (pp.207-210,212).

Sir Humphrey Briggs of Earnstrey Park, eldest surviving son of Sir Morton, was elected to represent Much Wenlock in 1646, alongside Pierrepoint. Both Bridgnorth and Ludlow had two vacancies each, which were filled in 1646 by Robert Clive and Robert Charlton for the former and Thomas Mackworth and Thomas More for the latter. Neither Clive, who came from Styche near Market Drayton, nor Charlton from Apley, had been amongst the founding members of the Shropshire county committee. Clive had been a Colonel in the army and had been present at the taking of both Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth, and Charlton was Richard Baxter's brother-in-law, who was also involved in the conquest of the county town.[73] Both first appear as committee members in June 1644, when they were appointed to raise money for the maintenance of the county troops.[74] Thomas Mackworth was only nineteen when he was elected, seems to have had no political or military experience due to his age, but had obviously inherited his father's politics and values, and in an act of pure nepotism was proposed for election by the burgesses of Ludlow. They obviously had concerns about his candidacy, not only due to his age, but also the fact that he had no connection with the corporation in an official capacity. His application to be made a burgess, prior to the election process, was supported by his father, who wrote to the bailiffs of the town in glowing terms about his son's abilities on 22 June 1646.[75] Thomas More was the son of Richard, and brother of Samuel, who was then governor of Ludlow as well as of Montgomery, and was soon to hold the same position in Hereford. In any event, both were returned in accordance with sheriff Thomas Mytton's writ.[76] Even though they were both county men, neither was local to Ludlow, and that is something that obviously rankled with the corporation, as both were removed as burgesses upon the restoration.[77] Bishop's Castle elected John Corbet upon the recommendation of Samuel More, who described him as his cousin as well urging the burgesses to 'promote the good of the Common Wealth in general, and of the Towne in particular.'[78] Corbet was a lawyer by profession, who was later

[73] H.T. Weyman, 'Members of Parliament for Bridgnorth', *TSANHS.,* 4th Series, Volume V (1915), pp.1-76, (pp.58-60).
[74] *A & O,* Volume 1, pp.446-450.
[75] SA:LB/7/1942. SA:LB/2/1/1/ p.233 – Mackworth was made burgess on 23 June 1646.
[76] SA:LB/7/1792. SA:LB/2/1/1/ p.224 - More was made a burgess in July 1646.
[77] H.T. Weyman, 'Members of Parliament for Ludlow', *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VII (1895), pp.1-54, (pp.27-29).
[78] BCHC: First Minute Book, fol.209.

appointed chief judge of Breconshire, Glamorgan and Radnorshire. He was also named a commissioner of the trial of Charles I, but did not sit. The town also elected a truly local man as their second MP, for Esay Thomas had held various position within the town council, as had his father and grandfather before him, and at the time of his election he was the Town Clerk.[79] He was on the Committee for the Collection of the County Assessment in 1647. Corbet was more involved in central matters, and he was appointed to sit on various committees, namely for the Affairs of Ireland in 1647, the Compounding Committee and the Committee for the Engagement in 1649, and finally the Council of State, along with his father-in-law Isaac Pennington, and Robert Wallop and William Masham in 1651.[80]

The new MP for the shire, elected in the recruiter elections, to work alongside Sir John Corbet, was Humphrey Edwards, who owed his return to the machinations of Thomas Mytton. Edwards, from Shrewsbury, was the elder brother of the royalist Thomas who had sat on the Commission of Array, and was, perhaps, a peculiar choice as he had been a gentleman pensioner to the King in the late 1630s, and had been a courtier up until the beginning of the war, when he had left the court and distanced himself from the King.[81] Furthermore, his sister Lucy was married to Francis Ottley. Edwards was first appointed to the Shropshire committee in June 1644, but was also a member of similar bodies in Middlesex and London. He became part of the Independent faction of Parliament, and a firm supporter of the army. Although never a member of the Council of State, he was appointed as a commissioner for the trial of the King and signed his death warrant. He was also appointed to various committees concerning the Sale of Confiscated Crown and Episcopal lands. Some never trusted Edwards, Clement Walker describing him as a 'half-faced Cavalier, changing his party for his profit', which was not surprising as he was 'greedy of an office,' and had only achieved his position as an MP through 'an Undue Election.'[82] Walker was not, however, impartial, as Edwards had taken the office of chief usher of the Exchequer away from him, and was behind his subsequent imprisonment. There was truth,

[79] H.T. Weyman, 'Members of Parliament for Bishop's Castle', *TSANHS,* 2nd series, Volume X (1898), pp.33-68, (pp.47-49).
[80] *CJ*, 1651-1660, p.42.
[81] *HV,* Part II, p.174.
[82] Clement Walker, *A Case between Clement Walker esq. and Humphrey Edwards, truly stated* (1650).

however, about the manner of Edwards's election. Andrew Lloyd of Aston, then governor of Bridgnorth, was the preferred candidate amongst the freeholders of the county but Thomas Mytton, who was the sheriff, had other plans. His preferred candidate was Edwards, but that gentleman did not have the popular vote. The election was to be held on the morning of 27 August 1646. The freeholders were perplexed at the venue, which was described as 'the remotest part of the countie,' but the town was apparently where the court was sitting that day, so they travelled to cast their votes. Early in the morning, however, Mytton left the town, and when he met some of the voters on the road, told them he was simply going to collect some correspondence from London, and that he had left the election in the hands of the under-sheriff. In fact, Mytton had secretly moved the venue to Alberbury. The court sat at Oswestry until 9.30 and then decided to move to Alberbury, before most of the freeholders had arrived to vote. They did, however, travel the thirteen miles to follow Mytton, many having arrived by the appointed time of the poll, which was 10 am. Those that had managed to get to Alberbury in time voted for Lloyd, but Mytton refused to accept the poll, and declared Edwards to be duly elected. Three hundred and thirteen freeholders, including Samuel and Thomas More, John Corbet, Sir Humphrey Briggs and Robert Charlton, petitioned Parliament about the election procedures, particularly as they believed that the few supporters Edwards did have were of 'meane qualitie and many of them verily thought not freeholders.'[83]

Despite the petition, Edwards kept his seat, but why Mytton went to such lengths is unclear. Roberts noted that they were related, but the *Herald's Visitation* does not suggest this to be the case.[84] It could well have been an opportunity to right the perceived slights that had been perpetrated upon him by the local Committee of Defence during the war years. It was no secret that they did not see eye to eye, presumably because Mytton had the support of Denbigh, who saw the others as a mere interference, and believed that his protégé 'deserved more of the Parliament than the rest of the committee.'[85] The

[83] OTC: A75/1/27. W.A. Leighton, 'The Records of the Corporation of Oswestry, *TSANHS*,1st Series (1880), pp.69-148, (pp. 14-108). *CJ, 1646*-48, p.134.
[84] *ODNB*, entry by Stephen Roberts.
[85] J.E. Auden, 'My case with the Committee of Salop, Colonel Mytton versus the Parliamentary Committee,' *TSANHS*, Volume XLVIII (1935-36), pp.49-60, (p.51).

rest of the committee, however, who did not trust Mytton, constantly complained to the Committee of both Kingdoms about his behaviour, particularly over his governorship of Oswestry, where the garrison soldiers were running amok in Mytton's absence, which was undermining the 'souldiary of this county'; Mytton's response to this was to blame the local committee who he said had denied his men their wages, so in an attempt to calm the situation he had paid £400 out of his own pocket.[86] Mytton had also desperately coveted the position of governor of Shrewsbury, which went to Mackworth, and this episode with Edwards was possibly his revenge, particularly as by that time he was commander-in-chief of the forces in North Wales, and so had little to do with the daily running of the county.

The incomers made little impact on Parliament during their first couple of years in the House. In fact, from 1646 through to 1648 it was only Pierrepoint who took an active role, and that was purely to do with negotiations with the King, and as things came to a head with the army, trying to keep relations between them and Parliament on an even keel. Things changed radically in the county after Pride's Purge in December 1648. David Underdown conducted a thorough investigation of events, dividing the MPs up into five categories, namely: active revolutionaries who openly committed themselves to a revolution in November and December 1648; conformists who avoided formal commitment in November and December, but accepted the *fait accompli* in February when the execution was over; abstainers who were not actually excluded, but showed their opposition by staying away from Parliament generally until the spring of 1649; victims of the purge who were secluded; and the enemies of the army who were imprisoned as well as being secluded.[87] The purge had a substantial effect on the county. Those MPs who were secluded were Sir Humphrey Briggs, Sir John Corbet, Robert Charlton, Thomas More and Esay Thomas.[88] The abstainers were Robert Clive, Thomas Hunt and William Pierrepoint.[89] John Corbet, William Masham and Thomas Mackworth were all conformists, which left Humphrey Edwards, who seems to have been a revolutionary and, as a result, kept his seat without

[86] *Ibid.,* p.54-56.
[87] David Underdown, *Pride's Purge* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp.210-211.
[88] *Ibid.,* pp.369-371,380,387.
[89] *Ibid.,* pp.370,377,383.

problem.[90] None were arrested by Pride's men, but many did not appear in the House again.[91] Whitelocke noted a petition from Humphrey Mackworth and the soldiers of Shropshire to General Fairfax, which applauded his actions 'praying the general to continue to represent to the commons these desires of their friends, and not to hearken to the counsels of their enemies, and to make a present settlement without any more addresses to the King,' so that 'justice may be done upon the Authors of our troubles and bloodshed in the three Kingdoms in some exemplary way, suitable to their crimes, and without respect of persons.' The petition itself, which was apparently read out to the House on 26 December 1648, does not seem to survive, but it was an unusual stance for Mackworth to have taken, as he had never shown himself to have particularly republican views. Auden posited that the petition could have been drawn up by a few, and signed by many who did not realise its full purport, but it is doubtful that Mackworth himself would have been led so blindly by others.[92]

After the purge, there is no mention in the *Commons Journal* of Sir John Corbet, Robert Clive, Robert Charlton, Humphrey Briggs, Thomas More (the Colonel Moore referred to later in the *Journal* is, in fact, his brother Samuel), Thomas Hunt or Esay Thomas from December 1648 onwards. There is, however, a notation of a Mr Mackworth, which could be Thomas, but was probably his father Humphrey, sitting on a Commission concerning a petition from the inhabitants of Nantwich on 2 January 1649, along with a Mr Corbet (possibly John, but it could be Miles) and Humphrey Edwards.[93] Thomas Mackworth went on to be appointed to the Committee of Indemnity on 7 January 1649, he and Edwards sat on a committee concerning the powers of the High Court of Justice in August 1650, and in January 1651 he was involved in the payment of army accounts.[94] There is also a mention of a Mr Corbet who was charged with others to investigate obnoxious publications on 13 December 1648; this

[90] *Ibid.,* pp.371-372,379.
[91] Rushworth, Volume VII, p.1355.
[92] Bulstrode Whitelocke, *Memorials of the English affairs from the beginning of the reign of Charles the First to the happy restoration of King Charles the Second*, Volume II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1853), pp.483-484, and J.E. Auden, 'Shropshire and the Royalist Conspiracies between the end of the First Civil War and the Restoration, 1648-1660', *TSANHS*, 3rd Series, Volume 10 (1910), pp.87-168, (pp.109-110).
[93] *CJ*, Volume 6, 1648-51 pp.108-109.
[94] *Ibid.,* pp.113,216-217,383,416,456,524.

again could be Miles, but John Corbet went on to carry out government business with regard to the sale of episcopal lands and promotions, the sequestrations of delinquents, the regulation of trade, the relief of creditors, and the relief of those affected by the war.[95] A Mr Pierpoint [*sic*] sat with him on that last committee, but that could have been Francis Pierrepoint, as could the MP that sat on the Committee for Regulating Universities in March 1650; Mr Pierpoint [*sic*] also appears to have been at work on the Committee for the Sequestration of the Estates of Henry Morgan of Northamptonshire and John Preston of Lancashire in order to pay the debts of the late John Pym.[96] Certainly, if that gentleman is William Pierrepoint, he was sitting with far less frequency than in the war years, for which he had received the recognition of the House, particularly for his part in negotiations with the King during 1648.[97] Humphrey Edwards also kept busy, as he was appointed to the Committee to Assess the Value of Crown Lands in February 1649, and also sat on the Committee for the College of Westminster, that for Debtors' and Prisoners' Affairs, and Restraint of the Importation of Hats.[98] William Masham is only mentioned once in the *Commons Journal*, unlike his father who seems to have been highly valued as a committee member. Masham junior is noted as sitting on a Commission concerning the Justices of the Peace in February 1649.[99]

In the later years of the Commonwealth, John Corbet sat on the Committee authorised to Consider the Humble Petition of the Army in August 1652, and Pierrepoint (presumably William) on the Committee trying to streamline the workings of the Treasury in July of the same year. [100] No mention is made of the other MPs. Things changed again in 1653 with the dismissal of the Rump Parliament by Cromwell on 20 April. The new incarnation was known as the Nominated Assembly, whose members were not elected by freeholders in the usual way, but were put forward by the Council of Officers and then approved of by the Council of State, and it first sat on 4 July 1653. Shropshire had only two

[95] *Ibid.*, pp.97,116.
[96] *Ibid.*, pp.388,589.
[97] *Ibid.*, p.92.
[98] *Ibid.*, pp.150,216,219,247.
[99] *Ibid.*, p.134.
[100] *CJ*, Volume 7, pp.164,159.

representatives, William Botterell and Thomas Baker.[101] Neither of these men had been on any of the local committees in the past. Botterell took over the governorship of Ludlow from Samuel More in April 1649, when he was described as Captain Bonnell.[102] Botterell was a long time bailiff of the corporation, certainly in post in 1636 and remained so in 1660.[103] In 1651 he sat on the Commissions concerning the insurrections in Wales, alongside Humphrey Mackworth, Humphrey Edwards, Sylvanus Taylor, and Thomas Mytton amongst others.[104] He also sat on the Committee for the Inspection of Treasuries which was established on 20 July 1653.[105] Thomas Baker came from Sweeney, outside Oswestry; he was dismissed by Gough as a parvenu who had more money than breeding. Baker had, however, made the most of his riches, for he bought land and became a JP, and was made high sheriff of the county in 1649.[106] Eventually in 1649 it was formally certified by William Riley, Norroy King at Arms, that he was descended from an ancient family in Kent and was therefore allowed to bear arms and a crest.[107] Baker sat on the Committee for Prisons and Prisoners, and prior to the Nominated Assembly being instigated was a deputy sergeant at arms to the house.[108] He had already been made a commissioner of Assessment for Bedfordshire in 1651 (Thomas Harris of Prescott, who was related to Pierrepoint through marriage, was appointed for Shropshire).[109] What impression they made on their respective committees is not known, but Botterell receives no mention in the *Commons Journals*, perhaps preferring to concentrate on his local duties, though Baker seems to have been busy during the 1650s.

It was not just the MPs that changed during the Commonwealth, for there were also changes at a local level. What is apparent, however, is that in most of the towns there were no radical alterations, as was

[101] John Towill Rutt, ed., *The Diaries of Thomas Burton*, Volume 4, March-April 1659 (London, 1828), pp.499-500.
[102] *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1650, p.85.
[103] SA:LB/4/1/466. SA:LB/4/1/605.
[104] *CJ*, Volume 6, 1648-51, p.591. Henry Alexander Glass, *The Barbone Parliament* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1899), p.72.
[105] *Ibid.*, p.92.
[106] *HJ*, Volume 10, 25 November 1648, p.608.
[107] *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1649-50, pp.372-373.
[108] Glass, *Barbone Parliament*, p.92. *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1652-3, p.343.
[109] *CJ*, Volume 7, 1651-1660, p.55. *HV*, Part I, p.244.

the case during the war itself. We have already seen that Botterell remained in an official capacity in Ludlow corporation from 1636 onwards without any backlash, despite his obvious parliamentarian sympathies, unless they were kept well hidden. Faraday noted that there were few changes within the town, as many officials were not obvious in their political affiliations, and out of twenty-one post-war bailiffs, fourteen had held official positions before the war.[110] An example of this is Rowland Williams who started as a churchwarden in 1638 and stayed within the corporation for over twenty years, finally being elected high bailiff in 1661 and 1667.[111] The only two expulsions in Ludlow in 1646-7 were Richard Dewes and Roger Harries, but both were excluded for their poor behaviour rather than for any political affiliation.[112] It was a similar situation in Bishop's Castle, as the same people or families were elected or appointed as town officials throughout the period. The only thing that generally changed was the positions that they held, but all remained burgesses, and none were demoted due to any allegiance. Even John Baker, a burgess, who had been suspected of being one of the royalist sympathisers in the town, remained in the corporation, and was made bailiff in September 1645, only standing down of his own accord in 1650, purely through age and ill health.[113] Further proof of the corporation's ambivalent attitude towards allegiance is found in the town Minute Book, which reveals that it spent 40s on entertaining Sir Robert Howard, a former commissioner of Array, and his wife in 1649.[114]

The surviving information suggests no mass changes in Bridgnorth or Much Wenlock, which is surprising so far as the former was concerned. In 1648 the Committee for Compounding examined Richard Si[y]nge, Simon Beacham [Beauchamp], Richard Symonds [Simons] and Edward Harri[y]son for delinquency, as all had been 'in arms' under Colonel Billingsley at Tong, and Synge was a 'bitter malignant' who had declared that it would be better the town burned than being taken by Parliament, and had imprisoned some who had refused to serve on the local guard.[115] Yet all continued to serve as

[110] Michael Faraday, *Ludlow 1086-1660* (Chichester: Phillimore & Co., 1991), p.177.
[111] *Ibid.*, p.197.
[112] SA:LB/2/1/1.
[113] E. Griffiths, *History of Bishop's Castle*, Volume LX, Powysland Club, 1899, pp.30-31. BHCH: First Minute Book, fol.217.
[114] BCHC: First Minute Book, fol.216.
[115] *CCC*, Part 3, p.1816.

officials within the corporation, and all were chamberlains at some point between 1645 and 1649 seemingly without problem, probably because no further action was taken against them.[116] In Much Wenlock the town clerk, Francis Smith, was suspected of delinquency and was removed from his post, being subsequently replaced on 19 September 1646 by Michael Stephens of Affcot.[117]

Radical changes occurred in Shrewsbury, but that was no surprise, as it had been a town of divided loyalties from the beginning of the war. Therefore in 1645 and 1646 those who had been active for the royalist cause were removed from office (many were still either imprisoned or under house arrest anyway), and those who had been barred from their official positions in 1642 were reinstated. What was surprising was that Charles Benyon was appointed as mayor in 1651, given that he had held the same position when the town was under royalist control in 1644. Presumably he was thought to be loyal to Parliament and certainly was never suspected of delinquency, and he was also appointed to sit on several local committees after the war. There was also a suggestion that the corporation made Andrew Lloyd, Robert Charlton, Robert Clive and Samuel More burgesses, even though they were not native to the town.[118] If that was the case their names are not endorsed in the town Assembly Book.[119] There were only two governors left in the county, as other garrisons were closed. In Shrewsbury, Humphrey Mackworth remained in office throughout the Commonwealth, whereas in Ludlow Samuel More held the position only up until 1649, when he was replaced by Botterell. More was moved on to become governor of Hereford, but kept his position in Bishop's Castle corporation, and was elected bailiff in 1647.[120] Mackworth was also appointed as recorder of Bridgnorth in 1647 and was still in post in 1653, with a yearly salary of £2 13s 4d.[121]

[116] SA:BB/D/1/2/1/56-58.
[117] SA: Wenlock Minute Book, p.711, yet uncatalogued.
[118] *HoS*, Volume I, p.458, Barbara Coulton, *Regime and Religion, Shrewsbury 1400-1700* (Almeley: Logaston Press, 2010), p.105.
[119] SA:3365/68, Assembly Book B. H.E. Forrest, *Shrewsbury Burgess Roll* (Shrewsbury, Shropshire Archaelogical and Parish Register Society, 1924).
[120] BCHC – Minute Book, fol.211.
[121] SA:BB/D/1/1/2/56 and 63.

It must be remembered that it was not only the administrative personnel that altered. Throughout the county, the religious make-up of the parishes altered with the introduction of the classis system, which was a Presbyterian unit of church government, and which was started with immediate effect after the end of the war. The justice system was also affected, as those gentlemen who had previously presided over the Quarter Sessions no longer sat, and were replaced by those loyal to Parliament, many of whom were already part of the local committees. In Shrewsbury, the headmaster of the school was also ejected from his post almost as soon as Parliament had won control of the town. Thomas Chaloner had been headmaster of Shrewsbury school since 1636. He had not been the first choice of the corporation, who had wanted to promote the second master John Harding, but had remained in post after an expensive legal battle over the right to make such appointments was lost by the town authorities. The court agreed that under the school ordinances of 1577-8 they came under the remit of the Bishop of Lichfield and St John's College, Cambridge.[122] Chaloner remained as headmaster throughout the war, during which time he allowed the royalist Council of War to meet in the school library, and accommodated several royalist grandees, whilst Charles himself stayed nearby at the Council House. Chaloner was also complicit, along with some members of the corporation, in allowing £600 to be given to the King from the school's coffers. In February 1645, Chaloner was stripped of both his employment and his assets or, as he put it, was 'cast out to the crows.' The school's second master, David Evans, remained in place and continued to teach throughout the Commonwealth; presumably he held onto his employment, because he had little or no dealing with the royal visitors and gave Parliament no concerns, but the school bailiff, Robert Forster, lost his place. The replacement headmaster was Richard Piggott, a friend of Richard Baxter, who came from either Newport or Northwich, and who substantially increased pupil numbers during his tenure.[123]

[122] G.W. Fisher, *The Annals of Shrewsbury School*, (London: Methuen & Co., 1899), p.48.
[123] *Ibid*., pp.150,173-174. Sylvester, *Baxterianae*, part III, p.98. Anon, *A History of Shrewsbury School* (Shrewsbury, 1999), pp.48,99-109.

# Finances

At the end of the war, not only was trade depressed, and people's properties and goods destroyed, but also ever-increasing assessments were placed upon the population. What really hit hard was the combination of all the extra monies that were required, to repair, replace and maintain both the populace and the infrastructure of the county at a time when many were financially in dire straits. For on top of new exactions imposed by Parliament, there was the normal monthly assessment that had been in place since the war, plus the extra lewns to support the increasing number of poor and maimed of the parish, repair of churches and other local amenities damaged during the conflict, and the taxes that had been imposed on certain household goods. Luckily, the compounding of delinquents brought in vital revenue, some of which was for the county's own use, and certainly helped to repair damaged churches, several of which had been garrisoned or used for defensive purposes during the war, and paid the ministers' stipends. Humphrey Walcot, for example, had to pay £160 per year to maintain four ministers in the parish of Clun, in order to reduce his fine, and Sir Vincent Corbet had to settle £80 per year on the church at Linslade, Buckinghamshire (where he had a estate worth £600), in perpetuity.[124] Excise duties had been applied to many household goods since July 1643; starting with imported wines, cloth and dried fruit, but also including domestic beer, ale, cider and perry, they soon included imported soap, paper, glass and salted food stuffs.[125] Many would not have affected the average Shropshire householder, but the excise on alcoholic beverages certainly did.

In June 1647 Parliament passed a new ordinance to pay the army the wages that were due; applied countrywide, it increased each county's assessment considerably. Shropshire's went up to a staggering £5,531 19s 9¾d.[126] Why it was so large is not clear, and certainly it was well above the sum demanded from its neighbours. Cheshire had to pay just over £345, and Chester city just under £40, Herefordshire's

[124] TNA: SP23/1, p.88 (Walcot). *CCC*, Part 1, p.67 (Corbet).
[125] *A & O*, Volume 1, pp.202-214,274-283.
[126] *Ibid.*, p.959,973.

sum was £868 2s 3d, Staffordshire's £454 15s 4d, and Flintshire's £331 6s 4½d. Out of the neighbouring counties, Montgomeryshire came the closest with an assessment of £1,161 2s 8¼ d. [127]

New Assessment Committee members were appointed in June 1647, whilst others no longer appeared.[128] Those that had not been reappointed to the committee were Brereton, Berkeley, Ashurst, Leighton, Bradshaw, Spurstowe (deceased), Heylin, Meredith, Taylor, Kynaston and Shute. Presumably those members who were not native to Shropshire had work elsewhere, particularly Bradshaw, who by then was Chief Justice of Chester and North Wales, and Brereton, who was deeply involved in central government. Robert Corbet of Stanwardine was recalled, as were Lancelot Lee, Hercules Kinnersley, John Prowde, and the rest of the members were all seemingly local, although for many their origins are obscure. Again, some names were familiar such as Isaiah (Esay) Thomas and Francis Harris, soon to be appointed as Bishop's Castle's Common Attorney.[129] Thomas Mackworth appeared as a member, as he was now of sufficient age to serve, and Sir Humphrey Briggs and Thomas Baker were also included.

Those who had had no prior committee experience included: Robert Powell of the Park near Oswestry, who was sheriff of the county that year;[130] John Thynne, who was from south Shropshire and had business dealings with Littleton in the late 1620s;[131] Francis Forrester (Forster) of Watling Street, who was to be appointed sheriff of the county in 1652, had inherited Wellington Hay and purchased the manor of Little Wenlock and was also related to William Steventon of Dothill.[132] Thomas Kettleby of Steeple in the parish of Neen Sollars, was the son of a former JP Thomas and Ann the daughter of Sir Edward Littleton; Thomas senior was made a commissioner of the Peace in 1634, but died in 1647.[133]

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[127] *Ibid.*, pp.958-959.
[128] *Ibid.*, p.973.
[129] BCHC: First Minute Book, fol.211v. *HV*, Part I, p.244.
[130] J.B. Blakeway, *The Sheriffs of Shropshire with their armorial bearings* (Shrewsbury: W. and J. Eddowes, 1831). p.123.
[131] *HV*, Part II, p.461. *VCH*, Volume 10, p.14.
[132] For Forrester: *HV*, Part I, p.188. For Steventon: *HV*, Part II, p.455. For both, *VCH*, Volume 11, pp.215-216.
[133] TNA:C231/5, p.156. Ralph C. Purton, 'The Kettlebys of Steeple', *TSANHS*, 4th Series, Volume II, (1912), pp.112-118 (p.113).

Creswell Tayleur of Longdon on Tern, who was married to William Steventon's daughter Anne, and Edward Cressett of Cotes, not to be confused with his namesake from Upton Cressett who signed the declaration of loyalty to the King in August 1642;[134] Edward Whichcott of Stoke, who was related to the Foxe family on his mother's side; Rowland Hunt, who was the son of Thomas; Roger Rowley, who was the son of the late William;[135] Arthur Chambre of Petton, Thomas Clive, Rowland Hill, Richard Whitehall and Samuel Sandford, who were all from the north of the county (the Whitehall family was from Dodington near Whitchurch, Sandford from Sandford, south of Prees Heath, Hill and Clive from the Hawkestone and Styche areas);[136] Thomas Locker (Lokyer), who was the son and heir of Francis, bailiff of Wenlock.

The Jeremiah Powell who was appointed could either have been the burgess of Montgomery, who approved the return of Richard Herbert of Chirbury as a member of Parliament in 1640, but was more probably Robert Howard's deputy steward.[137] The latter could well have been the person involved in the uprising at Clun, along with Francis Harris, although this is supposition; certainly if he was Howard' s man then it would be the right area of the county, but Howard was a royalist, so Powell must not have had the same allegiance as his master.[138] William Child, later described as Doctor at Law, had married Ann Lacon, heiress to Kinlet in 1640, and so was probably resident there.[139] Henry Powell of Worthern, who was later described as a gentleman, was the deputy steward of the Court Baron of the Purslow Hundred.[140] As for Edward Sone, William Cockton, John Wybunbury, Richard Harris, Samuel Towers, and Isaak Shepheard, nothing can be ascertained about their backgrounds, although Harris came from a Cruckton family.[141] Michael Stevens (Stephens) has already been confirmed as the Bishop's Castle bailiff who replaced the delinquent Francis Smith at Much Wenlock. There are no personal details

[134] Offley Wakeman ed., *Abstract of the Orders made by the Court of Quarter Sessions for Shropshire* (Shrewsbury: Shropshire County Council, 1901), p.vii.
[135] *HV*, Part II, p.423.
[136] *HV*, Part I, p.99, *HV*, Part II, p.432. SA: P303/1/1/2, p.283.
[137] *HV*, Part II, p.339, SA:5981/A/64, and Powys Archives:M/B/MO/39.
[138] *Perfect Occurrences of Parliament*, 20-27 December 1644.
[139] *SPR*, Hereford Diocese, Volume XVII, Kinlet Register, p.vi.
[140] SA:5981/A/91.
[141] *HV*, Part I, p.244.

available about John Wybunbury, but there is a possibility that he was from Cheshire (possibly Hankelow) and had land in Adderley.[142] Wybunbury's loyalty to Parliament must have been in question, however, as a John Wibumbury had signed the royalist *Ingagement* in December 1642, and, as will be seen later, became involved in Booth's rebellion in 1659. The final commissioner was the current mayor of Shrewsbury, which in 1647 was Thomas Knight, followed by Richard Llewelin.

Eight months later, the county was called on to find an extra £184 13s 3d per month to fund the soldiers in Ireland, which must have been particularly unpopular given the large number of Irish soldiers who had been quartered in the county during the war. Harcourt Leighton was added onto that committee, along with Owen George from Shrewsbury corporation, John Ashton (Aston), a member of Ludlow corporation, who was to be appointed high bailiff in 1649, and Thomas Gardner, whose details cannot be clarified.[143] Parliament passed one other financial ordinance that year, for the payment of £60,000 per month for Fairfax's troops, of which the county had to contribute £535 19s 9d.[144] The pressure put on the country by Parliament for money never stopped, as in April 1649 it asked for a further sum of £90,000 to pay the troops for six months, and Shropshire was required to provide over £830 of that. Again, new figures appeared on the committee, namely Henry Dorrel of Worthern, William Brain, William King, William Botwel (he could well be William Botterell, a Ludlow burgess and governor of the garrison there) and Samuel Swannich, who was probably the captain referred to by Gough as coming from Myddle and who had been apprehended in December 1642, presumably for suspected disloyalty to the King.[145] Swannich was later named as a justice of the peace sitting at the May session of the Shrewsbury Assizes.[146]

They were joined by several additional members in May of that year, including Thomas Edwards of Kilhendre, Richard Cresset of Cound, Thomas Kynaston of Ryton, Charles Langford, Morris Overton,

[142] SA:327/2/2/73/2-3.
[143] *A & O,* Volume 1, pp.1090-1091. Faraday, *Ludlow,* p.197.
[144] *A & O,* Volume 1, pp.1107,1109.
[145] *Ibid.,* Volume 2, pp.24-27,29,41. Gough, *History of Myddle,* p.29. Ottley papers, *TSANHS,* 2nd Series, Volume VII (1895), p.270.
[146] Offley Wakeman, *Quarter Sessions,*p.9.

John Broom, William Crowne, William Jukes, Charles Bennion, Mr Langley (presumably the neutral Jonathan), Mr Huxley from Wenlock, Daniel Bennion from Ash and Thomas Hayes of Shrewsbury. The Edwards family had been at Kilhendre Hall at Duddleston since the thirteenth century, and had played a part in county politics during that time; it can only be assumed that the Thomas Edwards mentioned was not Sir Thomas, sheriff in 1644 and supporter of the crown, but his son by Edwards senior's second marriage to Cecily Brooks, nephew of Humphrey Edwards, and son-in-law of John Hayes.[147] Richard Cressett came from the Upton Cressett family, who had obviously aligned himself with Parliament despite his father Edward's loyalty to Charles I, and he, too, was a JP during the Commonwealth.[148] Kynaston was from another old county family related to the Chambres and Heylins through marriage.[149] Langford came from Sibton near Aston on Clun, and was a business associate of John Aston, Francis Harris and Michael Stephens.[150]

There was an Overton family in Much Wenlock, and Jukes seemed to come from the same area.[151] John Broom was probably a yeoman who was a tenant of the manor of Edgton, and also held land in the manor of Newlands, both in the south-west of the county. He must have been prosperous, as he purchased two farms from the sequestered Craven estates. Colonel William Crowne was Humphrey Mackworth's brother-in-law who had been at the taking of Shrewsbury, and was a JP who sat on the Compounding Committee for the county. Charles Benyon had been part of Shrewsbury town administration for years, had been bailiff in 1626, had been appointed deputy sheriff in 1631, mayor in 1644 and again in 1651; presumably Daniel was a relation in some way. Matthew Henry in his memoirs referred to Bennion (Benyon) as a 'dear friend and kinsman, and an Israelite indeed, a true lover and ready benefactor to all good men, especially good ministers.'[152]

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[147] *HV*, Part I, pp.172-173. E. Kimber and R. Johnson, *The Baronetage of England*, Volume 1 (London, 1771), pp.528-529. SCC HER Number (PRN):16784.
[148] *HV*, Part I, p.158. Offley Wakeman, *Quarter Sessions,* p.vi.
[149] *HV*, Part II, pp.297-298.
[150] SA:5981/B/2/298 and 302. BCHC: First Minute Book, fol.219v.
[151] SA: WB/F/2/2/21/10/13.
[152] Broom: SA:465/230 2705/36. *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1659-60, p.130. Crowne: Offley Wakeman, *Quarter Sessions,* pp. ix-x. Benyon: SA:215/63, 5981/C/464, 3365/2569/14. Matthew Henry, *An Account of the life and death of Mr Philip Henry, Minister of the Gospel near Whitchurch in Shropshire* (Edinburgh, 1792), p.231.

A further £90,000 for six months of army expenses was required of the country in December 1649, and Shropshire had to find £1,700 per month as its contribution. Even more members were added to this committee, all of whom seemed to be local men. The assumption is that the appointed Henry Mildmay was the MP for Maldon who at the restoration was deemed a regicide, and he seems to have had a connection with Robert Wallop. John Wetenhall, which could be a misspelling of John Walthall, who was a town draper, who became mayor in 1659. Job Charlton from Ludford was allied to the local Blunden and Waring families through his two marriages, and later became MP for Ludlow. The different spellings of surnames have sometimes made it difficult to pinpoint some members, a prime example being William Braine. The name appears on committees two years apart. The man named on the 1649 committee was the parliamentarian soldier who was appointed as town clerk of Ludlow in 1648. In 1652, a named member of a committee was Master William Brayn of Whixall (who had been previously accused of treason), but it is impossible to say whether these two men were one and the same. On the one hand, the name is unusual and therefore suggests we are dealing with a single person, but on the other, it would have been extremely unlikely for a man from the north of the county to have official position some forty miles to the south.

The others sitting on the 1649 committee – Thomas Evans, William Whitcome, John Hammond, Richard Yonge of Alderton, and John Griffiths of Turstry (Oswestry) – have obscure origins.[153] An even higher sum of £120,000 per month to cover four months' expenses was required in November 1650, and this time the county's contribution was £2,266 13s 4d; Simon Edwards, John Harris of Cruckton and Simon Kynaston were added to the committee.[154] Thankfully it was another two years before a similar ordinance was passed, with the county's contribution remaining the same. Additions to the committee were not only Brayn, but also Roger Evans, Thomas Harris of Prescot and John Chetwood of Oakeley just over the border in Staffordshire, who later became a commissioner for

[153] *A & O,* Volume 2, pp.285-6,288,306-7. *ODNB,* entry by Newton Key for Charlton. SA:LB/2/1/2 for Braine.
[154] *A & O,* Volume 2, pp.456-490.

Securing the Peace of the Commonwealth in his home county.[155] Other newcomers were Richard Smith of Ness, George Barker of Colehurst, Edward Heneage and George Downs. Thomas Mackworth and Robert Wallop reappeared, both having been missing from the financial committees for some years.

Amongst the heavy demands on the county were funds to support the poor and maimed soldiers and to repair the infrastructure. The town of Bridgnorth paid out 5s 10d for the poor and for apprenticeships in 1640-41, but in 1646-7 that figure rose to £2 10s 2d, and from then, £3 6s 8d was paid out yearly until 1653, when an extra £1 1s 3d was expended.[156] In Bishop's Castle several large lewns were requested, some of which fell on the burgesses alone. Repairs were required to the town hall, the conduit and the washing pool, but the restoration was behind schedule, as 'many officers of this Towne have been backward in passing and settling their accompts to the great prejudice of all good government and hazard of the overthrow of the Corporation.'[157] Things got so bad, that in June 1648 when the burgesses were asked to pay an 'indifferent' lewn of £12, they were informed that if they did not pay, they would be 'diffranchised then and there and disqualified from having any benefit from their burgesship.'[158] In July 1649 a £10 lewn was assessed upon all the town to repair the town hall, but payments must still have been lacking as two years later £30 was ordered to be paid by the burgesses in order to defray all the outstanding charges.[159] It is no wonder, therefore, that every effort was made by the authorities to recoup any losses. In 1646 Shrewsbury corporation acted against Thomas Chaloner and others, namely Richard Gibbons, the former mayor, and Thomas and Robert Betton, the sons of the late Robert Betton senior, for what they saw was misappropriation of the £600 loaned to the King in 1642. The proceedings were still ongoing in 1653, Chaloner seems to have given appropriate responses to the charge and no further action was taken, but the case against Gibbons was unresolved. Chaloner's defence was that as most of the corporation had agreed to the loan, he did not dare refuse to hand the money over, and had

[155] John Sutton, 'Cromwell's Commissioners for Preserving the Peace of the Commonwealth: a Staffordshire case study' in Ian Gentles, John Morrill and Blair Worden, eds, *Soldiers, Writers and Statesmen in the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1998), pp.151-182, (p.163).
[156] SA:BB/D/1/2/1/51,56,59,61,62.
[157] BCHC: First Minute Book, fol.212.
[158] *Ibid.,* fol.212v.
[159] *Ibid.,* fol.214 and 219v.

noted the event in the school register, which was subsequently removed. Gibbons's counsel told the court that his client was old and infirm, had been imprisoned for years and exiled from his home, meaning that he was extremely poor. On that basis, the court decided that he did not have to compound for his estate.[160]

The Shropshire Committee of Compounding had its fair share of troubles, but that was not uncommon as such difficulties occurred throughout the country. There were substantial delays in the process, which was sometimes deliberately drawn out as the owners tried to deceive the committee assessors of their estates' true worth. There were also allegations of theft and fraud and general mismanagement on the part of the collectors, and finally it became obvious that those who had to do the actual work felt that the grandees at Goldsmith's Hall had no idea what it entailed. Shropshire encountered constant demands from the central committee for its returns, which were lacking in 1650 because of the plague that was raging in Shrewsbury where the books were kept. At one point London threatened to levy a £20 fine on committee members, commissioners, collectors and their solicitor if monies were not forthcoming soon.[161] Yet the county did not seem too disturbed by these threats, and in fact queried the wisdom behind some of the procedures. In June 1650, having received yet another demand for the sequestration monies, and a resulting lack of response from the collectors, they queried the wisdom of just sending the name of the non-attenders to London, suggesting that they be allowed to detain them instead. They also politely suggested that, instead of proving delinquency by questioning two witnesses first, which gave those being investigated more than sufficient notice to 'convey away his estate,' they should seize the assets first and then take evidence to prove the case before disposing of the assets.[162] Goldsmith's Hall obviously did not agree with this course of action, so it was suggested that evidence from one witness before sequestration would be more efficient, but again those in power refused to entertain the suggestion.

[160] Fisher, *Shrewsbury School*, pp.140-143 (although the dates of the court case seem to be wrong).
[161] *CC*C, Part 1, pp.331-332.
[162] *Ibid.*, pp. 255-256.

In real terms, it was a difficult task administering such a rural county on a shoestring budget, for, as the Shropshire committee told its superiors in London, 'the charge in carrying on of the work will be very great, as we shall be forced to sit at several places in the county a week at a time, to examine witnesses, so as to prove the value of estates not compounded for, and to employ many officers at our own charge.'[163] Furthermore, often the witnesses required to prove delinquency lived in remote parts of the county, and would not attend to give evidence unless their expenses were allowed, which were having to be paid by the officials themselves, as the local committee was adamant that it 'would not allow a case to be lost for want of a small sum for witnesses.'[164] The sequestrators were therefore often out of pocket, so it is not surprising that Robert Lathropp, who had been appointed to the committee in February 1650, withdrew from the position shortly afterwards.[165] The committee received numerous reminders from London as to its duties, yet overall its members managed pretty well; in April 1650 they reported six delinquents for non-payment, whereas there were seventeen in Cheshire.[166] By September 1650 they were meant to have collected half of the yearly sum that was due (£715 8s 2½d) to be forwarded to London; £550 had been collected, which was not bad considering the circumstances, but not good in the eyes of the central committee.[167] In March 1652 the local compounders finally fought back, telling the central committee, in no uncertain terms, that they were expending considerable expense in their travels around the county (as much as £40 per year in some cases), and received little reward in return except for being abused by malignants. They therefore advised Goldsmith's Hall that they were willing to 'surrender our Commissions if you can find others more faithful.'[168]

There was some difficulty employing assessors and collectors, which was not surprising given that the commissioners themselves were only paid 1s per day and had to pay the men out of their own funds, which often left them out of pocket, particularly as great distances had to be travelled to the estates and

[163] *Ibid.*, pp.331-332.
[164] *Ibid.*, pp.287, 180.
[165] *Ibid.*, p.173.
[166] *Ibid.*, p.190.
[167] *Ibid.*, p.313.
[168] *Ibid.*, p.556.

much time spent in the assessments.[169] It was no wonder, therefore, that there were instances of dishonesty. One of the collectors, Edmond Kendrick, alleged that Joseph Prowde, the senior collector, had offered another collector, Thomas Higgins, £500 for the money that he (Higgins) had collected to induce the latter to draw up proper accounts. Kendrick also implied that Higgins had other plans for the money, and Higgins's detention was authorised.[170] The irony was that, a few days later, the Shropshire committee complained to London that Kendrick was absent, and had refused to appoint a replacement, and his 'carriage has been more prejudicial than his services can be profitable.' He was illiterate and not fit for employment. It was alleged that 'he has detained some rents, under pretence of his fees, and… also omitted to secure the tithes for augmentations from those ministers who refused to take the oath.'[171] He was found guilty in his absence of 'seizure of Sir or Col. John Corbett's estate, driving away the cattle, taking part of the stock, and omitting in his account tithes worth 40l a year.'[172] He had also kept some rents in lieu of his fees, belittled the committee in front of the alleged delinquents and generally overstepped the mark.[173] Kendrick was replaced by Thomas Fox and John Llewellyn, the Pendrill interrogators.[174]

Another of the collectors who seemed to hold back some of the collected rents was the Shrewsbury draper Richard Bagot, who, according to his fellow sequestrator, William King, only paid £400 out of £440 received into the local committee's accounts. The shortfall was still outstanding some two years later, which was a prime example of the disorganised system that most of the local committees laboured under. The Shropshire committee had informed those at Goldsmith's Hall that it would take it around six months to gather together and study all the (thirty) collectors' returns before it could carry out any more work; as it was, it was nearly two years before Bagot's 'discrepancy' came to light, and probably would not have been questioned had King not wanted to settle his own accounts.[175] Yet it was not just

[169] *Ibid.*, pp.331-332.
[170] *Ibid.*, p.268.
[171] *Ibid.*, pp.319.
[172] *Ibid.*, pp.325.
[173] *Ibid.*, p.319.
[174] *Ibid.*, pp.280-281.
[175] *Ibid.*, pp.396,577.

the lowly Kendrick, and his fellow collectors, Charles Langford and John Browne, who were fined £20 each for neglect of their duty.[176] William Crowne, who was Humphrey Mackworth's brother-in-law, was appointed as an official after Mackworth specifically asked Colonel Godfrey Bosville MP for the placement, which was seconded by John Corbet.[177] He was formally appointed in June 1650, and became treasurer of the committee in October 1650.[178] It was a bad decision, however, as evidenced by the central committee's letter to him in July 1654, which, in not-so-subtle terms, indicated that they knew he was lying over the submission of his accounts, and gave him an ultimatum that if none were forthcoming within fourteen days it would take his commission away, and have him replaced.

Crowne was replaced by Joseph Prowde, who had substantial difficulties in obtaining the necessary paperwork from his predecessor. By October 1654, Prowde was certainly feeling the pressure, particularly as the central committee had recommended, or as Prowde saw it, imposed, John Buttery of Shrewsbury, who was 'faithful and trustworthy that no exception can be taken against him' as a sub commissioner. He informed the local committee that he knew that 'the late agents' (which presumably included Crowne) had received the rents and arrears that were due on Lady Day, but they had not passed the money on, so there was 'much money in several men's hands, received and not accounted for.'[179] Since Prowde had no access to the account books, he could not ascertain how much fraud had taken place, and therefore he could not send his accounts to London. This could not have been an exaggeration by Prowde, as Thomas Hunt and Benjamin Prowde, a London draper, and presumably a relative of Joseph, offered themselves up as security to ensure that the accounts were submitted. Crowne duly received a threatening missive from the London committee, but even then, took another two months to deliver the paperwork.[180]

[176] *Ibid.*, p.365.
[177] *Ibid.*, pp.180,243.
[178] *Ibid.*, pp.631,331.
[179] *Ibid*., pp.706-707.
[180] *Ibid*., pp.718-719.

There were also some complaints of mismanagement by compounders and other petitioners. Perhaps the prime example concerned the estate of Sir Basil Brooke at Madeley.[181] Brooke had been imprisoned in the Tower on suspicion of treason, and, as a Papist in arms, his estate was permanently seized.[182] On 31 December 1646 Sir Basil died, leaving the estate to his son, Thomas, also a Catholic, so the estate remained under sequestration. Initially a group of local men – Henry Bowdler, Thomas Scott, and John Pallett – took over the lands and iron works, offering other tenants reduced rents. There were allegations of mismanagement and theft, but the local committee came under fire from London when it gave the tenancy to Edward Cludd of Orleton, a relative of Brooke's who was suspected of Catholic tendencies and harbouring royalists. The men of Madeley objected to him as a tenant, particularly as they had been offering to pay a higher rent than Cludd. Eight local men from a variety of minor backgrounds petitioned the Committee for Compounding in London, who had sympathy with them.[183]

The London committee ordered Shropshire not to renew Cludd's lease, if the Madeley locals could come up with some sort of security. The Shropshire committee preferred Cludd, a 'gentleman of worth and quality', who was also able to provide a £10,000 bond to secure the lease for seven years; it accused Bowdler of carrying a personal vendetta against Cludd, but London ordered it to give the petitioners preference at the expiry of the lease, particularly as they were offering £800 per year rent as opposed to Cludd's £500. No security could be found, however, and the lease was granted to Cludd at a rent of £750.[184] Cludd died in September 1651, and the year after Thomas Brooke forfeited the estate for treason, whereupon it was purchased by John Wildman.[185] There is no real evidence to prove dishonesty within the Shropshire committee, as to its preference of tenants. It has been said that Cludd was a better landlord, investing heavily in the estate, and leaving the iron works more profitable than it ever had been under Brooke.[186] It could have been a question of social standing, Cludd being a gentleman

[181] Christopher O' Riordan, 'Sequestration and Social Upheaval: Madeley, Shropshire and the English Revolution', *West Midlands Studies*, 18 (1985), pp. 21-31.
[182] S.R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625-1660*, 3rd Edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), p.299.
[183] SA: P/180/E/3/12, 'The state of business depending betweene Michael Richards and Josiah Peters.'
[184] *CCC*, Part 3, pp.2204-2236.
[185] *A & O*, Volume 2, pp.591-598.
[186] *VCH*, Volume 11: Telford (1985), p.46.

whereas the Madeley petitioners' occupations ranged from master collier to labourer. On the face of it, however, the decision does have to be questionable, as from looking at the figures, the tenancy of the Madeley men was a better source of income for the county.

Monies coming from Brooke's estates were used to fund the navy under the provisions of a 1652 ordinance.[187] Also caught up in that legislation was the non-Catholic William, Lord Craven. He took no active part in the civil war but was close to Elizabeth of Bohemia (the elder sister of the King) and her family, and was a royalist sympathiser. He was informed upon by a Major Falconer, who gave evidence to the Council of State that Craven had liaised with, and offered his services to, Charles Stuart at Breda; the Committee of Compounding heard evidence (although not supporting that given by Falconer, who was later tried for perjury) from other witnesses, and as a result the local committee was ordered to seize his Shropshire estate, and it was decided to sell it off to fund the navy.[188] Craven petitioned Parliament constantly for the return of his lands without any success; in 1653 he argued that his estate was only put up for sale on the third presentment before Parliament, and only then by a narrow margin of three votes. The members who had swung the vote towards a sale had then purchased parts of his estate. He was also the beneficiary of his brother John's estates, which were also forfeit due to delinquency, and campaigned at the same time for the restoration of his inheritance.[189]

In 1654 he had published *The Lord Craven's Case Briefly Stated*, which was a plea to 'your Majesty' Cromwell to intervene in his case, reiterating that he had been 'convicted' of delinquency purely on the word of a perjurer, and that the actions thereafter taken by Parliament were unlawful.[190] His Shropshire properties that had been disposed of were: Tugford manor, which had been bought by a Richard Shephard and others; two farms in Winstanton parish, bought by John Groom; the manors of Stanton Lacy and Overbury, purchased by Thomas Mackworth and Richard Sankey respectively; Ryton,

[187] *ODNB*, entry by R. Malcolm Smuts.
[188] *CJ*, Volume 6, 1648-1651, pp.545-546. *CJ*, Volume 7, 1651-1660, pp.160-161. TNA: SP14/6,13.
[189] *CCC*, Part 2, pp.1616-1622 and pp.1622-1626 regarding his late brother John Craven's estate and Lord Craven's properties that had been sold on through the Treason Trustees.
[190] *The Lord Craven's Case Briefly Stated* (London, 1654).

Melverley and Kinnerley manors, sold to Ralph Darnell; Stokesay, purchased by Colonel Robert Thorpe; the manor of Oswestry, bought by John Manley; and Little Dawley, bought by Joseph Pyke, a vintner from London.[191] Yet due to the agents that Craven had appointed to settle matters on his behalf, his estate was the only one in the county that had not been discharged by October 1654, according to the beleaguered Joseph Prowde, and some property remained unsold and tithes unpaid.[192] It was not until March 1660 that the trustees of his estates were ordered to stop any sales, though his expectation for the immediate return of his lands upon the coronation of Charles II was dashed. [193] At the restoration he expected the sales to be declared void, but Charles II did not want further disharmony, so it transpired that anyone who had not already repurchased their forfeited land would either have to apply to the Lords for a private bill, or engage in court proceedings.[194] Craven petitioned the Lords, and they initially ordered a 'Stop and Stay of demolishing or defacing of, or committing Waste' on his properties.[195] They later agreed that he had not had a fair hearing, and that a decision had been made by Parliament without any real proof; this ruling voided any previous sales, and restored both his real and personal estate, along with any rents or profits due.[196]

John Weld of Willey and his son supported the King during the war and thus had to compound for their sequestered estates.[197] John Weld senior's affairs were settled quickly from November 1645 onwards.[198] John Weld junior was not so honest about his affairs. He initially made a very polite and swift assessment of his lands, but in doing so seems to have duped the local committee into undervaluing his Broseley estate so that his fine would be less. He later complained to Goldsmith's Hall that the Shropshire commissioners would not allow him back onto his land despite the composition, and so those in London ordered the local men to give him possession. It soon became apparent, however, that

[191] TNA: SP/18/794,806,811,819,826,882,903,931.
[192] *CCC,* Part 1, p.707.
[193] *CJ,* Volume 7, p.879.
[194] Joan Thirsk, 'The Restoration Land Settlement', *The Journal of Modern History,* 26, No.4 (December 1954), pp.315-328.
[195] *HJ,* Volume 11, 1660-1666, p.22.
[196] *HJ,* Volume 11, pp.38,55.
[197] William Phillips, 'The Sequestration Papers of Sir John Weld, Senior, and Sir John Weld, Junior, Knights of Willey', *TSANHS,* 3rd Series Volume I (1901), pp.158-214.
[198] *CCC,* Part 2, p.978. TNA: SP23/209/143.

he did not actually own the piece of land that he claimed he was barred from, which was in Chelmarsh. In 1652, Richard Brinley (not Kinver as Phillips suggested) petitioned Goldsmith's Hall, complaining that Weld had entered onto the land accompanied by two soldiers and proceeded to evict two of his (Brinley's) tenants, even though Weld had never held the property, and had not compounded for it. Brinley complained to the justices of the peace who could not act, but the central committee ordered that the land be restored to the petitioner.[199]

Some of the delinquents argued until the bitter end over what was owed, and generally avoided their liabilities. Sir Richard Newport and his son Francis were prime examples, as their case took over three years to be finalised. Sir Richard was one of the commissioners of Array for the county, who had given vast amounts of money to the royalist cause, and allowed his house at High Ercall to be garrisoned for the crown. Towards the end of the war he had escaped to France, so it was his eldest son Francis and Sir Richard's wife Rachel who compounded on his behalf.[200] Francis had fought for the crown, being captain of a troop of horse, until he was captured at Oswestry. He was deemed to be a dangerous and active person and was kept in secure custody throughout the proceedings, not being released until 1650.

On 18 October 1645, the committee ordered that Francis compound for his delinquency, with any resulting fine being used to support the county. He was brought up from Stafford gaol a few days later, and in November accepted that he had gone to the King at Oxford and so now asked to compound for his estate. What happened to his father and step-mother's composition at that time is unclear, but on 10 February 1646 a fine of £16,687 13s 3d was imposed for all the Newport lands. Payments must have been made as on 24 July 1646 £3,500 out of the total was ordered to be given to the county committee to disband local troops, but towards the end of September Francis started to dispute the value of his estates, despite there being evidence to the contrary from his own bailiffs and his servants. He argued that there had been overestimates on the part of the committee, particularly on the High Ercall property;

[199] *Ibid,* p.1202. TNA: SP23/201/132, SP23/129/553, SP/70/823, SP23/16/23.
[200] William Phillips, ed., 'The Sequestration Papers of Sir Richard First Baron Newport and Sir Francis Newport his Son', *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume XII (1900), pp.1-38 (pp.1-6).

his retainers had heard him put a value of £5,000 on the estate, but he claimed that he had no idea of the true value of the land and was simply using the assessment previously given by Prince Rupert, which put the value at £212.[201] The matter was referred to the committee, and after much wrangling the total amount due from father and son was reduced to £9,463 on 24 January 1647. For Francis, however, things were not at an end, as throughout 1647 he subtly asked for the payment of the fine to be delayed, by requesting that his tenants hold onto their Lady Day rents for the time being, otherwise he would not have sufficient funds to pay the fine when it was due. These requests went on through most of 1647, and so during that time the committee could not have been collecting much, if any, payment from him. So far as his father was concerned, he never appeared before any committee, claiming illness. He begged to compound on 23 April 1646, and as he did not take advantage of a pass that would allow him to travel to London in May, his wife Rachel was bidden to compound on his behalf at the end of July. In fairness to her, she got the family affairs in order quickly, and so by 23 January 1647 Richard Newport's fine had been fixed at £4,450, reduced by £850 if he paid the tithes of the rectory at £85 per year. During the next months, there was dispute over the value of the tithes, some of which were held back by the local committee, and in 1648 Sir Richard asked for various debts to be considered, whilst complaining that the ministers in three of his local parishes were not paying him sufficient rent. It was thus more than two years before matters were finalised.[202]

The Newports' fine was the heaviest in the county, which Coulton suggested may have been due to an element of revenge on the part of the local commissioners. She argued that there had been bad blood between Thomas Hunt and Francis Newport, even before the conflict had begun. However, it is doubtful that any personal animosity of that nature would spill into the compounding proceedings, particularly as the fine was based on the level of wealth, and the Newports were probably simply seen as a good source of income for the county.[203] The local Compounding Committee members were Pierrepoint, Sir

[201] *CCC,* Part 2, pp.924-925. TNA: SP23/107/173, SP23/175/ 712. Phillips, 'Newport sequestration', pp.21-25.
[202] TNA: SP23/3/392, SP23/107/158-159, SP23/196/570, SP23/3/38.
[203] Barbara Coulton, 'Thomas Hunt of Shrewsbury and Boreatton, 1599-1679', *TSANHS,* Volume LXXIV (1999), pp.33-42, (p.36).

John Corbet, Mytton, Mackworth, Brereton, Myddelton, Wallop, Long, Berkeley, Ashurst, Leighton, Bradshaw, Lloyd, Niccolls, Hunt, Humphrey Edwards, Samuel More, Heylin, Spurstowe, John Corbet, Clive, Charlton, Meredith, Shute, Ward, Owen, Thomas More, Creswell Tayleur and Samuel Kynaston. It is doubtful, therefore, that Hunt could possibly persuade his twenty-eight fellow commissioners to be overly harsh concerning the Newport valuation.

Other Shropshire royalists, especially those who had been commissioners of Array, were hit hard, Francis Ottley was fined £1,200, John Weld senior, £1,121 18s 4d, Sir Thomas Wolryche, £730 14s, Sir Vincent Corbet, £1,588, Sir Richard Lee, £3,719 13s 4d and Francis Thornes, £720. Sir Thomas Scriven was dead, as was Sir Paul Harris, but their sons Richard and Thomas had to compound on their behalf in the sums of £187 and £1,542 respectively.[204] Harris had to pay an additional sum for his alleged involvement with Lord Byron, and it was ordered that the monies from his sequestered estate be used to fund the horse guards.[205] Lee also had to pay a higher sum, as eventually two-thirds of his estates were sequestered as he was a proven recusant who had refused to take the Oath of Abjuration.[206] Not all the commissioners appeared before the Compounding Committee, but this could simply have been because the paperwork was lost. Somerset Foxe never had his estate sequestered due to co-operation with Colonel Birch in the surrender of Ludlow castle, and Sir Francis Kynaston is not mentioned in the compounding papers, yet both the estates of his elder brother Roger and son Edward were sequestered.[207] Sir William Owen of Condover, on the other hand, seems to have been dealt with extremely leniently, considering that he was an enthusiastic supporter of the King. He received a fine of £314, whereas his son Roger was fined £700. Sir William argued before the central committee that the position of commissioner of Array had been thrust upon him. Interestingly, his cause was also supported by the local committee; Thomas Niccolls, Andrew Lloyd, Leighton Owen, Robert Clive and Robert Charlton informed the central committee that Owen had helped the parliamentarian soldiers

[204] Anon, 'Shropshire Compounders,' *TSANHS*, 1st series, Volume IV (1881), pp.156-158. TNA: SP23/187/480, and SP23/6/122 (Ottley), SP23/192/702, SP23/3/313, SP23/6/112 (Corbet), SP23/198/244, SP23/4/38 (Wolryche), SP23/198/427, SP23/4/38 (Thornes).
[205] *A & O*, Volume 1, pp.1221-1222.
[206] TNA: SP23/62/364.
[207] Parliamentary Archives: HL/PO/JO/10/1/231. *CCC*, Part 2, p.1024.

enter Shrewsbury in 1645, as he owned the Council House close to where entry had been effected, and had provided his house three miles north of the town as a base, as well as providing 'faithful and constant intelligence to us of the Enemyie.'[208]

In general, most compounders paid their fines in time and without argument, even though some had done very little to help the King's cause. Thomas Chaloner had to pay £60 to the compounders for his part in allowing the King to raid the school coffers, despite having a meagre salary and nine dependents.[209] Many that were caught up in the procedure were simply men in arms, such as Rowland Morris and his son Sylvanus, John Singe, Thomas through Talbot, and George Farmer, whose cases were all heard in 1648, but not proceeded against, presumably due to their lack of funds.[210] There were also those who had taken a more prominent part, namely Humphrey Walcot and Richard Oakley who had been assessed and ordered to pay money by both sides. Walcot's fine was assessed at £500 by the committee, and he had already suffered the ignominy of being captured by his own side. He claimed that he had only been defending his property, having been imprisoned by the crown, and bore no ill will against Parliament.[211] Like Owen, Walcot also had the benefit of the local committee's support, which may have reduced his composition. The committee members Mackworth, Niccolls, Clive, Hunt, Edwards and Owen all described him as 'a religious gentleman, and very good friend to many godly ministers and others in that part of the county.' They went on to explain that Walcot was 'safely under the King's power' but did nothing untoward so far as Parliament was concerned.[212] Oakeley had been initially penalised by Prince Rupert's tax, but still had to compound in the sum of £460.[213] He had been a royalist commissioner responsible for the raising of money in the county, and had paid for a dragoon, but he also claimed that the King's troops had ransacked his estate.[214] Thomas Hanmer was another who suffered heavily for his allegiance, but more so from the royalists than from Parliament. He was

[208] TNA: SP23/205/69.
[209] TNA: SP23/176. pp.43-45, SP23/3, pp.39-40.
[210] TNA: SP23/166, pp.217-219 (Morris), p.231(Farmer and Talbot), pp.231-5, and p.239 (Synge).
[211] *CCC,* Part 2, p.1060.
[212] TNA: SP23/174/385.
[213] *CCC,* Part 2, p.1119.
[214] W.G.D. Fletcher, 'The Sequestration Papers of Richard Oakley of Oakley', *TSANHS*, 4th series, Volume II (1912), pp.193-208, (pp.196-198).

fined £300 by the Committee of Compounding for holding Apley castle for the King (a reduction from the initial £400 ordered) in July 1645, having been held in captivity at Wem until his appearance at Goldsmith's Hall. Even that amount was seemingly beyond his means, as his estate was re-sequestered in January 1652 for non-payment of his obligations.[215]

## Religion and Justice

Two other integral parts in county life were religion and the justice system. They, too, experienced changes during the post-war years, but whereas the religious aspect of life changed beyond recognition, it was only the personnel that changed so far as the quarter Sessions and assizes were concerned. Episcopacy was officially abolished on 9 October 1646, when archbishops and bishops were formally removed from their sees and dioceses, and their lands and possessions sold for the good of the Commonwealth.[216] The sale would raise large sums of money, which was the primary reason behind the abolition, as £200,000 was due to the Scots at that stage.[217] In reality, the powers of the episcopate had been diminished for years and in practice no bishop, archbishop or diocesan authority exercised any power in post-war Shropshire. On the other hand, Parliament established new procedures which did take effect in the county. The ordinance of 13 June 1644, which formally established the county's Committee of Safety, also empowered it to eject scandalous and malignant ministers and school masters from their livings or posts. The committee members were mainly local men: William Pierrepoint, Humphrey Mackworth, Thomas Hunt, Thomas Mytton, Thomas Niccolls, Sir John Corbet, Andrew Lloyd, Samuel More, John Corbet, Sir William Brereton, Sir Thomas Myddelton, Walter Long, Robert Wallop, William Berkeley, William Ashurst, Harcourt Leighton, John Bradshaw, William Spurstowe, Humphrey Edwards, John Heylin, Robert Clive, Robert Charlton, Leighton Owen, Thomas More,

[215] *CCC*, Part 2, p.877.
[216] *A & O*, Volume 1, p.879-883.
[217] Peter King, 'The Episcopate during the Civil Wars, 1642-1649,' *English Historical Review*, 83 (1968), pp.523-537, (p.523).

Sylvanus Taylor, Samuel Kynaston, Arthur Ward, Christopher Meredith and Francis Shute. All these men have been or will be discussed elsewhere in this work.

Ministers or masters encompassed by the ordinance were those that refused to adhere to the edicts of Parliament, lived what was considered a scandalous life, or had been a supporter of the crown. These clergymen or schoolmasters were to be replaced by men deemed to be godlier.[218] The most popular reason for a minister being ejected was allegiance to the crown, even though other reasons may have been put forward by the examining committee, but a scandalous lifestyle could also entail failing to take the Oath of Engagement, or the Solemn League and Covenant, using the Common Prayer Book, or adhering to what were papist practices, such as bowing at the name of Jesus. Throughout the war, many ministers had left their posts. In Shropshire, it was mainly those of a more Puritan outlook, who were not welcome in a royalist-controlled county, but some ministers who supported the crown also left, generally to join the King's army. An ordinance of December 1642 enabled the income from those men's livings to be sequestered.

In Shropshire, at least sixty-five ministers were ejected from their livings from 1645 onwards, In June 1644 the same ordinance had not only established a county committee for the sequestration of delinquents' estates, but one to eject malignant and scandalous ministers and masters.[219] At that time, however, Shropshire was mainly under the control of royalist forces, so the parliamentarian committee was ineffective. After the fall of Shrewsbury in February 1645, the committee was in a stronger position to act upon its mandate.[220] Some ministers such as Andrew Baily of Shifnal also had their estates sequestered. According to Walker (who it must be conceded was not particularly impartial) Baily, a minister with a wife and sixteen children, had his house searched by parliamentarian soldiers who burnt £300 worth of books and seized plate and other household items to the value of £566.[221] A lengthy list

[218] *A & O*, Volume 1, pp.446-450.
[219] *Ibid.*
[220] J.E. Auden, 'The Ecclesiastical History of Shropshire during the Civil War, Commonwealth and Restoration', *TSANHS*, 3rd Series, Volume VII (1907), pp.211-310, (p.252).
[221] John Walker, *An Attempt towards Recovering an Account of the Numbers and Sufferings of the Clergy of England* (London, 1714), p.207.

of those ejected has been provided by Walker and Auden, who note that there were many reasons put forward by the committee for non-suitability. Yet, despite the official reasoning, in Shropshire most ejections were based on allegiances shown during the war.

The vicar of Oswestry, Humphrey Wynn, and Thomas Cloeburn, rector of Moreton Corbet, were evicted for no apparent reason, yet Wynn had signed the declaration of loyalty to the King in 1642, and presumably Cloeburn would have had direct links with the royalist Corbet family. George Griffiths of Llanymynech lost his living for adhering to the old church practices, but he, too, had signed the August declaration, as had another ejectee, Gervase Needham. Needham's experience of the war had been extremely mixed, as having signed the oath of loyalty to the crown in August 1642, he then went on to lead the people of Clun in their revolt against royalist oppression. But, at the end of the war, not only was he deprived of his living, but also his house and goods were burnt, and he was forbidden from keeping a school.[222] Some, such as Peter Studley, the arch-enemy of the godly population of Shrewsbury, was ejected for the plurality of his living, but he had never hidden his support of Archbishop Laud.[223] Other members of the clergy had made positive moves to support the King during the conflict. Thomas Fowler from Whitchurch had to compound in the sum of £130 for deserting his living to join the royal garrison at Shrewsbury, and James Fleetwood from Prees became an army chaplain attached to Lord Rivers's regiment.[224] Fowler had, in fact, been involved in the royalist cause since the beginning of the war, positively promoting the declaration made by the Grand Jury in August 1642 to his parishioners.[225] John Arnway, who had been ejected from his living at Hodnet during the war itself, had taken a more physical rather than spiritual role in the conflict. He had raised eight men for a troop of horse, and Thomas Fisher of Ludlow had undertaken a similar task, as well as taking ordnance from Bringewood forge.[226] For others such as Isaac Martin the rector of Great Bolas support for the King came in the form of words. The Committee of Compounding heard in June 1652 that he

[222] Auden, 'Ecclesiastical History', pp.254-245.
[223] *Ibid.,* pp.254-263.
[224] *CCC,* Part 3, p.1991.
[225] Ottley papers, *TSANHS,* 2nd Series, Volume VI (1894), pp.34-35.
[226] Auden, 'Ecclesiastical History', p.250.

had urged his parishioners from the pulpit to support Prince Rupert, and had requested that the governor of High Ercall, Sir Nicholas Armorer, come and pull his church down to prevent it being garrisoned by parliamentarians.[227]Some, such as Richard Awnsham of Hopesay, had been imprisoned in Shrewsbury before they lost their livelihoods. According to Walker, Awnsham, a father of ten, was 'most severely used' whilst incarcerated, and his living was eventually taken over by a former trooper called Stone.[228] Some ministers, such as Andrew Bailey, the vicar of Shifnal, had given the authorities no choice, as they refused to take the National Oath and Covenant or to administer it to others.[229] Schoolmasters were also caught up in the process, and Thomas Chaloner was not the only one who was ejected. Edward Payne, the headmaster of Oswestry school, was also ejected.[230]

Under Parliament's new system, the county was divided into six classes, more easily to consider the ministers and masters within that particular jurisdiction. The first classis covered Shrewsbury and its environs; the second was for Oswestry and the north-west of the county; the third was for Bridgnorth and the south-east of the county; the fourth for the north and north-east from Whitchurch and Wem across to Market Drayton; the fifth was for Ludlow and the surrounding areas in the south; and the final classis was for the south-west, including Stretton and Bishop's Castle. All classis members were a mix of ministers, preachers and local figures, including many members of the Committee of Safety and other committees, and as locals they would all know the men being examined for alleged misdeeds, and would be able to suggest suitable replacements.[231] The system was sent up with Presbyterian aims, but shortly afterwards, certainly after Pride's Purge, Presbyterian influence began to lessen considerably, as the Rump was dominated by Independents. This radical turnaround and the effect that it would have on the selection of acceptable clergymen was worrying for Presbyterians and really signalled an end to the classis system. It was reported that there was dissention in Shrewsbury, with ministers preaching

[227] SA: HIL/811/6/87.
[228] Walker, *Sufferings*, p.185.
[229] *Ibid.*, p.207
[230] Auden, 'Ecclesiastical History', p.262.
[231] For full details see Appendix A, and Anon, *The Severall divisions and persons for classicall presbyteries in the county of Salop approved by the Right Honorable Committee of Lords and Commons for Judging of Scandals* (London, 1647).

sedition against the Commonwealth and actively urging their parishioners to support the monarchy.[232] In Shropshire, fifty-seven ministers objected to this change and put their signatures to a tract entitled *A Testimony of the Ministers in the Province of Salop To the Truth of Jesus Christ and to the Solemn League and Covenant: As also against the Errors Heresies and Blasphemies of these times and the Toleration of them*, which supported the existing classis system. Written by Thomas Cook, the pastor of Drayton Magna, who would later be accused of using treasonous words against the Commonwealth, the ministers confirmed they were 'fully perswaded that it is constant to the rule of Scriptures and primitive practice in the Apostles times.'[233] The signatories were from parishes all around the county, and included all those ministers involved in the classis system. There was further dissent when the Oath of the Engagement had to be taken by all ministers, from October 1649, in which they not only had to swear they would be loyal to the Commonwealth. The Independents were more than happy to comply, but the Presbyterians were less so, even though reluctant to disobey the orders of a justice of the peace. A few local ministers were ejected from their livings for refusing to take the Oath, including Samuel Fisher of St Mary's, after he and Thomas Blake had been questioned by Humphrey Mackworth, senior, upon the orders of the Council of State.[234]

In many parishes, however, despite all the upheavals things carried on as normal and no-one complained that the latest practices were not being adhered to, especially regarding the registration of births, marriages and deaths. The August 1653 Act on this matter ordered that any marriage should be before a justice of the peace, and all parishes should appoint a Registrar, who should be 'an able and honest person' sworn in by a JP, to record all such unions, along with births and deaths. The objective was that the Registrar be a lay-man, with no ties to the church, but some parishes petitioned that it be the local minister or an associated person, which was not illegal under the Act, just not in the spirit of it. Donnington parish petitioned that the present minister, John Chapman, be the Registrar, and Newport

[232] Bulstrode Whitlocke, *Memorials of the English Affairs*, Volume III, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1853), p.157.
[233] Thomas Cook, *A Testimony of the Ministers in the Province of Salop to the Truth of Jesus Christ and to the Solemn League and Covenant: As also against the Errors Heresies and Blasphemies of these times and the Toleration of them* (London, 1648).
[234] *ODNB*, entry by Stephen Wright. *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1650, p.301.

elected the parish clerk Thomas Poole. So far as the civil union of marriage was concerned, even in a large town such as Shrewsbury the regulations could be evaded; Francis Tallents, minister of St Mary's, indicated that he and other clerics had subverted the marriage practice by calling a justice to witness the marriage ceremony and then declare it to be valid without conducting the ceremony himself.[235] It seemed that many parts of the county were resistant to change, continuing with the style of religious worship that they were most comfortable with, or perhaps was most financially expedient, as had been the case when Laud had first started introducing his reforms. In fact, when John Corbet wrote to the Ludlow corporation in September 1648 concerning the collection of an assessment, he demanded that, along with the money (£11 6s 2d), the officials bring with them every Book of Common Prayer belonging to the local churches, something that had been formally banned in 1645.[236]

So far as the justice system was concerned, very little altered except the composition of the Justices. The Quarter Sessions still sat, as did the assizes, but all the new justices were loyal to the Commonwealth, and the Grand Jury, appointed by a parliamentary-approved sheriff, would also have shown similar loyalties. Several new justices were added to the Commission of the Peace during this period, and others had their appointments reconfirmed. In February 1647, Humphrey Briggs, Arthur Mainwaring, Walter Long, Richard Cressett, John Thorne, William Stevenson, Francis Forrester, Phillip Young, Arthur Chambre, John Corbet of Anson, William Littleton, Robert Charlton, Edward Whicholt, Lancelot Lee, Leighton Owen, Thomas Kettleby, Roger Rowley and Hercules Kinnersley were all appointed as Justices.[237] They were joined in 1649 by Sir Gilbert Cornewall, Samuel More, and Job Charlton, and, in the following year, by William Crowne. In 1652, their numbers were swelled by Thomas Mackworth, Charles Langford, John Chetwood and Edward Cressett, and by John Downes in 1653.[238] In fact, Cornewall had originally been appointed in 1639, but as to whether he sat in the county during the war years is unclear as he was also a Worcestershire JP.[239] As we know Edward Cressett was

[235] Auden, 'Ecclesiastical History', pp.283-284.
[236] SA:LB/7/1938. *A & O*, Volume 1, pp.582-607.
[237] TNA:C231/6, p.74.
[238] *Ibid.*, pp.160,179,204,246,255,263. Wakeman, *Quarter Sessions*, pp. v-xi.
[239] TNA:C231/5, p.375.

from Cotes. Creswell Tayleur was from Longdon on Tern and was married into the Stevenson of Dothill family. He was later appointed as a justice of the peace. Phillip Young (Yonge) came from Shifnal, whilst William Jones was from the other side of the county near Oswestry and was related to the Powells of the Park. Both Yonge and Jones later held positions of responsibility, Yonge as MP for the county during the Protectorate and Jones as Recorder of Shrewsbury. No details can be ascertained about Whicholt, but from the bailiff's court proceedings, John Downes would appear to have been a regular litigant before the Wenlock bailiff's court, which would suggest that he came from the south of the county, but nothing concrete can be ascertained.[240] Almost all the other appointees to the Bench listed above have been or will be discussed elsewhere in this work.

The sittings of the Quarter Sessions at Shrewsbury restarted in 1647 and the Justices sat in 1648-9, 1650 and 1652-3. There is no direct evidence of the assizes taking place during this period, apart from certain accounts from Bridgnorth concerning the expenses incurred in housing and feeding the judges twice in 1650 and once in 1651.[241] At the quarter sessions held in Shrewsbury in 1647, the usual presentments from the town wards and liberties were made by the constables, but there were far fewer than for the last Sessions, so it can be presumed that some of the documentation has gone astray. The constables of Bicton, Andrew Matthews and George Evans, reported the same three men for illegal ale selling, but there were only five other such cases in Onslow, Moreton, Astley and Albright Hussey.[242] The following Sessions was held in 1649-50, in which year the number of offences of dishonesty and affray increased, but there was very little illegal ale selling, with only seven offenders spread out over the parishes of Astley, Acton Reynald and Hanwood.[243] The final Quarter Sessions took place in 1652-3, when it was obvious that illegal ale selling was on the increase, and for the first time had rocketed within the town itself, and its immediate environs, although further out in the liberties, things were generally quiet. There were forty alleged illegal ale sellers in the Castle ward, forty-seven in Welsh ward, whilst Stone ward had a staggering fifty-six such offenders. Just outside the town walls in Castle Foregate there were

[240] SA: WB/F/2/2/22/9/32 is one example.
[241] SA:BB/D/1/2/1/60-61.
[242] SA:3365/2242/48,50,61,77.
[243] SA:3365/2243/25,26,45,46.

ten illegal ale sellers, and three people were presented for malt making, although there were also thirteen people who had illegally kept swine in that district. Slightly further out, at Coleham, there were seven illegal ale sellers, two illegal maltsters and six illegal swine keepers. Abbey Foregate had twenty-three illegal ale sellers, along with five people illegally keeping swine, and five people recommended to be chargeable on the parish, including two with families. Across the river in Frankwell, twenty illegal ale sellers were presented to the court. [244]

Shrewsbury may have been concentrating on illegal ale sellers during this period, but this offence did not seem to trouble Ludlow so much, with only two surviving allegations of illegal ale selling, though as already explained, the legal documentation for the period is sparse, and, in the main, relates purely to candidates for the Grand Jury and the appointment of constables and other officials. In 1647, the court only dealt with minor offences, such as public drunkenness, theft, illegally slaughtering a cow, and selling items without a badger's licence.[245] In 1648, old tensions arose when information was laid against Thomas Heath, who in a conversation with Robert Prince, called Parliament the enemy. When Prince replied that there would be no peace again 'till the King die,' Heath retorted that the 'Kinge should reigne againe.'[246] In 1650 the main offence being investigated was that of the alleged witchcraft of Margaret Bridgens. When she was examined on 12 November 1649 she denied that she had any 'skill or knowledge,' but admitted to applying salves and medicines to infections. She denied receiving the linen of those who were diseased to work cures with, but had known someone a long time ago, and he had 'used the said Art.' Her daughter, Mary, told officials that her mother had been visited by a Mr Goodwife of Ashford and Francis Watkins of Richards Castle. She had heard the former be described as a wizard or charmer, and some had called her mother a wise woman. The witnesses, Margaret Jones and Joan Gilly, also provided statements, saying that her herbal treatments had not worked, but did not go into any further details.[247] The case seemed to have been brought out of either jealousy or an attempt to be reimbursed for the ineffective treatment. That year saw another incident or words spoken against

[244] SA:3365/2244/31,51,52,61,62.
[245] SA:LB/11/4/69/1.
[246] SA:LB/11/4/74/4-5.
[247] SA:LB/11/4/76/16-19.

Parliament and for the King.[248] In fact the 1650s showed how a microcosm of small town problems ended up before the court; there were incidents of public drunkenness, causing a nuisance to neighbours, recusancy, playing illegal games, fishing without the proper nets, baking bread on the Lord's day and failing to attend church. Officials also had problems with the repair to the infrastructure of the town, for which the chamberlain was presented on several occasions. One of the town Constables, Samuel Weaver, went to John Colbatch's house to collect lewns for the House of Correction, but Colbatch locked him and the churchwardens in his house and was abusive towards them, telling them that he was as good as they were.[249]

Reviewing events and developments in Shropshire over this period, the changes that occurred were not particularly calamitous for most of the county's population, but they certainly had a drastic effect on the lives of the gentry who had supported the King, both financially and socially. There does not seem to have been a deliberate policy of ostracism, but the royalists were certainly deprived of much of their income until their composition fines were paid, as well as not being welcomed back into the administration of the county. In contrast, in other counties such as Hampshire and Sussex, former royalists were accepted back into local government administration, for expediency if nothing else. As for those who had supported Parliament during the war, many were restored to their old positions within the county administration, and others, often with obscure origins, were introduced onto the committees. In that way, the post-war years provided opportunities for those with less social standing than would have been necessary to gain a position on the Commission of the Peace during the reign of Charles I. That there are few, or no, details available about the origins of some of these men itself implies that they were certainly less wealthy or socially acceptable than would have been the case before the war. Although it may never be clear, they may have been supporters of the Independent faction, perhaps recommended to fellow commissioners by the radical Humphrey Edwards, who sat on most of the committees. What is clear, however, is that again the commissioners and newly appointed justices of the peace generally came from Shrewsbury, the south, south west and north west of the county with no

[248] SA:LB/11//4/76/31.
[249] SA:LB/11/4/78/1-27.

representation from the north of the county. The finances of the county were stretched, but the collection of the assessments was, in general, a success, which is some measure of the hidden wealth in the area. The justice system did not alter, nor did the county's response to the poor and needy, but the religious aspect of county life changed radically twice during this period. Arminianism was abolished, as were the old trappings of worship, which was an anathema to many. On the other hand, the classis system and the parliamentary ordinances, concerning the style of worship and celebration of marriage, did not always stand well with the parishioners, who wanted a minister to preside over their union and take a lead in parish life rather rely on a more civil style of registration. There were certainly differences aired between the Presbyterians and Independents. The Nominated Assembly, substantially reducing the representation of the county, and radically changed the democratic process of elections. Yet as short lived as that Parliament was, it was a forerunner of further changes that would be introduced during the Protectorate and which would prove to be even more radical in many respects.

# Chapter 4

# From Protectorate to Restoration, from one 'Monarchy' to Another, from King Oliver to King Charles, 1653-1660

## Local Events, Rebels and Rebellions

The period 1653-60 saw several key national changes, all of which impacted to some extent on the county. Firstly, from 16 December 1653 England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland were governed according to the terms of a written constitution, initially the Instrument of Government, which placed power into the hands of Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector, aided by a Council of State and, to a lesser extent, elected Parliaments.[1] On paper at least, this provided for a diffusion of power and checks and balances, as Cromwell could not arbitrarily act alone, but had to have the consent of either Parliament or the Council of State before carrying out key initiatives. This form of government, the Protectorate, survived until spring 1659.[2] Secondly, a new tier of semi-military provincial government was imposed throughout England and Wales from autumn 1655 with the introduction of the major generals. These army officers were imposed by the Protector and Council of State onto groups of shires and given ultimate control over the administration of county affairs, aided by local deputies and the existing

[1] *A & O,* Volume 1, pp.813-822. S.R. Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate,* Volume II, (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1903), pp.330-339.
[2] Peter Gaunt, *Oliver Cromwell* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. 1997), p.158.

administrators, including justices of the peace. The major generals were to oversee not just administration, working alongside the existing system and officials, but also the social and moral welfare of the populace, by the eradication of licentious, immoral or ungodly behaviour. As we shall see, the system was short-lived and many major generals struggled to deliver their brief, sometimes clashing with local officials who were resentful of an outsider being imposed upon them, sometimes overwhelmed by the physical size of their jurisdictions, general lack of funding, and the fact that they were all army men rather than civilians.[3] The major general whose region included Shropshire, James Berry, seems to have encountered a few local difficulties, but as he had a large territory to 'police,' which also included Herefordshire, Worcestershire and all of Wales, he seems to have made little personal impact on the county. Thirdly, in religious matters there were more radical changes, with the system for choosing suitable ministers and schoolmasters being reformed yet again, to the chagrin of many of those who had been happy with the classis system. In fact, some of those who had only recently been appointed, were now deemed to be unfit for office and summarily dismissed.

In the general administration of the county, however, there were no radical transformations. New commissioners were introduced, and some replaced, but there were not the sweeping changes that had occurred in the direct aftermath of the war. Humphrey Mackworth was lost to Cromwell's Council of State in February 1654, and was replaced as governor of Shrewsbury by his son (also named Humphrey). Amongst the MPs who represented Shropshire over this period were four men who had not hitherto sat in Parliament (one of whom was Mackworth senior), and new JPs were appointed onto the Commission of the Peace. What was noticeable, towards the very end of the 1650s, was that some men who had royalist connections, some more overt than others, began to be introduced, or reintroduced, into the system of local officialdom, but again this was not a wholesale transformation, and the county effectively maintained its loyalty to Parliament until the return of the monarchy. After Charles II was proclaimed King there were further changes, and the old county gentry, who had been unwelcome in local administration for around fifteen years, were reintroduced into both local and national positions

[3] Christopher Durston, *Cromwell's Major-Generals: Godly Government during the English Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp.229-231.

of authority, whilst those who had supported Parliament throughout the 1640s and 1650s were, in general, removed from the senior posts.

The radical and rapid changes in central government that took place in a few months during 1653 had been unsettling, but had also given hope to some of the local gentry that the Republic was crumbling, and the house of Stuart would soon be returned to power. After the battle of Worcester, life in the county had been uneventful for a couple of years. However, the constitutional changes of 1653, and the altered perception of Cromwell's role in the running of the country, led certain idealistic, enthusiastic and often young county gentlemen to involve themselves in several plots and schemes to overturn the Protectorate, and assassinate Cromwell. Shropshire had experienced rumblings of dissention ever since the second civil war, often linked to events in neighbouring Herefordshire, but any rebellions had been confined to within the county borders. It was only in the years of the Protectorate that there was a more conjoined effort amongst the disaffected to bring the Republic down, rather than concentrate on singular local objectives. Yet these plans never came to fruition, mainly due to their disorganised nature, and the lack of discretion amongst the conspirators. The rebels were quite accurately described as 'every day forming designs, and plotting for the murder of Cromwell, and other insurrections, which being contrived in drink and managed by false and cowardly fellows, were still revealed.' Some insurrections were better executed and planned than others, but, in general, the authorities were aware of potential uprisings, particularly as the Secretary of State, John Thurloe, had an excellent network of informants and spies, who 'had most excellent intelligence of all things that passed, even in the King's closet.'[4]

There were few, if any, local links to the Sealed Knot, which was established in November or December 1653. David Underdown identified six key members of the organisation, none of whom had any links with the county. There was, however, a conduit between the society and the disaffected of Shropshire, and that came in the form of Sir Nicholas Armorer, a Northumbrian who had overseen the garrison at High Ercall during the first war. He had left the country after the end of the war, and by the 1650s was

[4] Child, Bruce, ed., Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson* (London: Keegan and Paul Ltd., 1904). p.258.

in exile in the Netherlands, attached to the household of Princess Mary.[5] Armorer regularly travelled from the continent to Britain gathering support for Charles Stuart, and in September 1653 journeyed to Shropshire and Staffordshire.[6] Whether he gained any support was doubtful, but he did make contact with both Sir Vincent Corbet, and his grandson Richard Scriven of Frodesley.[7] Corbet had fought for the King during the first war and Scriven's father Thomas had died of his wounds early on in the conflict, so there was no doubt where their loyalties lay. Both had assured Armorer at the beginning of April 1654 that they hoped 'not only to bring Shrewsbury in, but also Ludlow.' Yet, apart from some suggestion that Scriven was a recruiter for fellow local rebels, neither man seemed to have made any further effort to bring their plans to fruition.[8]

In May 1654, two cousins, Francis and Somerset Foxe from Caynham, near Ludlow, became heavily involved in a plot to assassinate Cromwell in London. Colonel John Gerard recruited the Shropshire men possibly in response to a purported reward of £500 from Charles Stuart to anyone who could 'by pistol, sword, or poison, or by any other way or means whatsoever, to destroy the life of the said Oliver Cromwell.'[9] His plan involved seizing the guards in the Mews, St James, the Tower, Whitehall, Islington and Southwark, whereupon the City would be overrun by local sympathisers, including apprentices who would raise the portcullises, and set fires at vital points. The main part of the plan, however, was for Gerard to assassinate Cromwell during his carriage ride from Whitehall to Hampton Court, seize the lord mayor of London and force him to proclaim Charles Stuart as King. How the Foxes came to get themselves involved is unclear; Auden believed that they and Gerard were cousins, but there is no evidence of any such relationship. Certainly, Somerset was an ardent royalist, having been active during the first war as Prince Rupert's secretary, and Francis was a London apprentice, who presumably was brought into the plot to encourage his fellow workers.[10] Yet Somerset had been

[5] *ODNB*, entry by Geoffrey Smith.
[6] BL: Add.MS 4180, fol.140 (Nicholas Papers). See also George F. Warner, ed., *The Nicholas Papers*, Volume II (London: The Camden Society, 1899), p.22.
[7] *HV*, Part II, p.435.
[8] *CCSP*, Volume II, pp.336,440. David Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracies in England 1649-1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), pp.91,108.
[9] *TSP*, Volume II, pp.248-249.
[10] *Ibid.*, p.415.

pardoned for his delinquency in 1647, in recognition of the help he had rendered in the surrender of Ludlow, and so his estates were not sequestered.[11] The scheme failed when Cromwell decided to travel by water rather than road, and before any alternative plan could be executed, the conspirators were arrested. Gerard, Somerset Foxe and a schoolmaster called Peter Vowell were tried for high treason before the High Court of Justice on 30 June. Somerset Foxe pleaded guilty before the court, his cousin already having made a full admission. The Foxes were both transported to Barbados in May 1655 for their crime, whilst Gerard and Vowell were executed. The Shropshire men later paid to be free of their servitude, and were back in the country the following year.[12] Somerset Fox regained his position in county society at the restoration; he was granted a pension of £300 per year by Charles II in April 1662, and was elected as MP for Ludlow in 1669-70 and 1678-9.[13]

Yet, most of the Shropshire royalists, who had formerly been so loyal to the crown, kept away from any further trouble. Andrew Newport, Sir Francis's brother, was suspected of being a potential conspirator against Parliament as he had been seen out at various 'hunting' parties with Lord Herbert of Chirbury and Mr Fowler of the Grange at Harnage during February 1655. There is no evidence that he took any physical part in the events to come, for as he later explained, he 'was as willing to put my hand to the ruin of the enemy as any of them, but… never saw any tolerable appearance of a force able to match the enemy, and… had no mind to be beaten, and then hanged.'[14] Yet in June 1655, both Newport brothers were committed to the Tower as a precaution.[15] The spring of 1655 saw uprisings throughout the country, and although not as well-known as the exploits of Penruddock and his supporters in the West, Shropshire and the adjoining Welsh counties had their own rebellions planned. The senior

[11] Parliamentary Archives: HL/PO/JO/10/1/231. *CJ*, Volume 5, pp.150,160.

[12] *TSP*, Volume III, pp.453-454. Abbot Emerson Smith, *Colonists in Bondage. White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607-1776* (US: Genealogical Publishing Co. Ltd., 2009), p.160. J.E. Auden, 'Shropshire and the Royalist Conspiracies between the end of the First Civil War and the Restoration 1648-1660', *TSANHS*, 3rd Series, Volume X (1910), pp.87-168, (p.136). For the full trial transcript see Cobbett *Complete Collection of State Trials*, Volume V (London, 1810), pp.518-539.

[13] *CSPD*, Charles II, 1661-62, p.338. H.T. Weyman, 'The Members of Parliament for Ludlow,' *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, VII (1895), pp.1-54, (pp.32-33).

[14] *TSP*, Volume III, p.202- witness statement of Robert Lee of Criggion dated 7 March and taken before Thomas Lloyd, Hugh Price, Edward Vaughan and Thomas Niccolls. Daniel Defoe, *Memoirs of the honourable Colonel Andrew Newport* (London, 1792), p.430.

[15] *TSP*, Volume III, p.537.

members of the county gentry had distanced themselves from any active dissent, but the younger generation, most of whom had been too young to have fought in the first war, had no such qualms. The situation in the borders at the beginning of March was very unsettled, even though most of the local population wanted peace. A letter from Wrexham noted, 'if this swelling breake and not draw in, you will heare more of a scabby itching tumor,' but there was still the hope that this was merely a 'taile of a smoaking firebrand.'[16] Despite all the fears, there were only a few ringleaders, and relatively few followers, as the numbers of those involved, or at least suspected to have been involved, seem to have been a lot lower than first thought. The targets were the Shrewsbury garrison, though Ludlow seemed to have been discounted by this time, and Chirk castle, the home of Sir Thomas Myddelton; both were vulnerable, as the former was severely undermanned, and the latter had no military presence at all.

The 'smoaking firebrand' of the group was Sir Thomas Harris of Boreatton, who had been actively recruiting local men to revolt against the parliamentarian regime. He was joined by Ralph Kynaston from Llansantffraid, and Sir Arthur Blaney from Tregynon in Montgomeryshire. Harris, apart from an alleged abortive attempt to aid Charles Stuart, had not seen any previous action in war. As for Kynaston, the position is not clear, and little is known of him or his family, but he would only have been young as he entered Shrewsbury School in June 1640, so it is doubtful that he would have had any previous military experience.[17] Blaney, on the other hand, had seen action, and was knighted for his bravery during the siege of Beaumaris in 1648. He had been sheriff of Montgomery in 1644, and had helped negotiate the terms of the surrender of Harlech in 1647. Despite this, he was deemed to be 'noe delinquent' in 1652 and his property does not seem to have been sequestered.[18]

Information was received from a gentleman of 'integritye and note near Oshwestrey' of a 'troope or small army of cavalleers… commanded by one Blaney, and they goe tomorrow night towards Chirke-

[16] *Ibid*., p.214.
[17] J.E. Auden, 'Register of the Names of Boys Admitted to Shrewsbury School. From March 5, 1636-7 to November 16,1664,' *TSANHS*, 4th Series, Volume VI (1916-17), pp.1-87, (pp.16-17).
[18] George Sandford, 'The House of Gregynog. The Blaneys and the Hanbury-Tracys, Lords Sudeley,' *Collections Historical and Archaeological of Montgomeryshire*, Volume VXIII (1885), pp.229-244, (pp.234-5). *CCC*, Part 1, p.590.

castle; it is reported there is a generall rising throughout England and Wales of that party.' In the meantime, both Ralph Kynaston and Thomas Harris were actively recruiting men to take both Chirk and Shrewsbury. Because of this information, Colonel Andrew Lloyd and others had hastened to Shrewsbury to help defend the town.[19] Sir Thomas Myddelton wrote to Daniel Lloyd, a Flintshire commissioner, at Wrexham, passing on the information about troop movements and potential uprisings. The letter was intercepted, presumably by one of Thurloe's local agents, leading to the assumption that either Myddelton or Lloyd was suspected of disloyalty. Myddelton had been under observation before, as during 1651 rumours had circulated that he had been corresponding with Charles Stuart. Myddelton had become increasingly disaffected with Parliament, particularly after his seclusion from the Commons after Pride's Purge, and the execution of the King. There was no concrete evidence of Myddelton plotting on behalf of the royalists, but as a precaution, Chirk had been garrisoned. On 14 May 1651, Myddelton had to enter a bond of £10,000, with two sureties of £5,000, and the promise not to do anything prejudicial to the good of the Commonwealth, or use his home for such a purpose. As the sureties had been met, Chirk was ordered to be de-garrisoned the following day by the Council of State.[20]

Harris's plan was for the group of rebels to rendezvous at his home Boreatton Park on 8 March 1655. They were then to travel to Shrewsbury, where some of them would congregate in local ale houses, whilst six men, two dressed as women, and two as servants, would visit the castle at around 4 o'clock on the pretence of a sightseeing visit. Whilst inside they would leave an entrance insecure, so that the others outside would be able to storm the building. Harris had acquired one hundred cases of firearms, which had been brought up from London, to arm his men; however, intelligence was circulating throughout the county, and so those in authority were forewarned of the plan and acted accordingly.[21] Cromwell was also made aware of the potential uprising, and so had authorized further troops to come to the county's assistance. He had also given William Crowne a commission for his own troop, to

[19] *TSP*, Volume III, p.207.
[20] *CSPD*, Interregnum,1651, pp.200,204.
[21] *TSP*, Volume II, pp.209-211.

combat 'this evil design.'[22] Unfortunately the expected help did not materialize in time, nor did any formal written commission, and so Mackworth junior and Crowne, who was his uncle, used their own initiative to defend the county. Mackworth reported back to Cromwell that, as the promised troop from Hereford had not arrived, he had raised as many local men as he could, and seized twenty horses from the town to provide mounts for them.[23] Crowne used his own money to raise some men, including John Evanson of Shrewsbury, Jeremiah Bromefield, George Doughty, Thomas Fox and John Buttery, by now a captain in the local militia.[24] Nothing is known about Bromefield's trade or standing in society, and Doughty was a glover, who was admitted as a burgess in 1647, and later became both a local commissioner and a justice of the peace.[25] Evanson was described as a gentleman, who had been one of the sequestrators involved with Harris's estate, and whom Harris later accused of keeping hold of all his rents and goods, something that Evanson denied.[26]

Crowne and his men raided Boreatton Park, and found Sir Thomas with six or seven other men along with twenty saddled horses, thirteen pairs of pistols, a small barrel of gunpowder, newly made bullets and their mould. They also detained a man who initially called himself White, whom Crowne was convinced was in fact James Duke of York, as there had been rumours that he was in the county.[27] All the occupants of the house were detained as were other men suspected of being involved in the uprising, but everyone apart from Kynaston denied any involvement in the plot. How many were actually involved in the planned uprising is unclear, though Myddelton had told the authorities at Wrexham that he thought that around eight hundred men had gathered at Llanymynech, and he believed that many Wrexham men had joined them.[28] Out of the local gentry most of the families who would have been natural conspirators were not implicated, except Harris of course. The only exceptions were Francis Thornes of Shevlock and Richard More of Linley, both of whom were questioned, but seemingly never

[22] *CSPD*, Interregnum,1655, pp.259-260.
[23] *TSP*, Volume III, p.208.
[24] *Ibid*., pp.326-327.
[25] SA:3365/68 – Assembly Book B – B125.
[26] *CCC*, Part 3, p.2027. *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1658-9, p.223. *TSP*, Volume IV, p.394.
[27] *Ibid*.pp.215-216.
[28] *Ibid.*, p.209.

charged with any offences. Francis Newport was also seized separately, but no arms or horses were taken from him, and he appears never to have been questioned about his dealings with the other would-be conspirators. Yet, according to one parliamentarian newsbook, he had provided some funds for the rebels' cause.[29]

In fact, it appeared that none of those involved paid the ultimate price for their actions, but the fate of many of the participants is unclear. This is possibly because no 'court of warre' was set up in the county, despite the request of Commissary General John Reynolds to Thurloe.[30] This was unusual as such courts were established at both Exeter and York to deal with the conspirators from the other rebellions that took place during that time. Some had been held in custody for months, however, and even in January 1656, Major General Berry reported that many 'divers lewd persons,' some of whom had been suspected of being involved in the plot, and others who simply led a dissolute lifestyle, had been detained. This included some Catholics, who had ignored Wareinge's summons to make themselves available for questioning. Such men, Berry proclaimed, were 'fitt to grind sugar-cane or plant tobacco, and if some of them were sent into the Indies it would doe much good.'[31] Harris does seem to have been kept in custody, but was not transferred to London by Mackworth until August 1655, which was unusual given the weight of evidence against him, and the fact that Harris had only just been released from the Tower after his involvement with Byron, when he planned this uprising. He later went on, peripherally, to involve himself in Booth's rebellion in 1659.[32] Auden believed that he was dealt with so leniently because he was Thomas Mytton's son-in-law (Harris was married to Mytton's daughter Mary), yet that is doubtful given the history between Mytton and other local committeemen.[33]

Ralph Kynaston, a man called Thomas Armstrong and William Eyton of Oreton in Flintshire seem to have been the only ones who were processed fully, in order that they be transferred to London,

[29] *A Perfect Diurnall*, 12-19 March 1655. Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracies*, p.202.
[30] *TSP*, Volume III, pp.336-337.
[31] *TSP*, Volume IV, p.394.
[32] *CCC*, Part 3, p.2027.
[33] *CCC*, Part 3, p.706. Auden, 'Royalist Conspiracies', p.143.

presumably for further questioning. Armstrong, the man who was originally arrested under the name of White, was not a local and in fact his background was something of a mystery. Armstrong initially stated that he had come from Holland to be a servant in the Harris household, but later went on to say that he had come to the county, via London, to see a mistress, and whilst he was in the area he had bought a horse for £20 from Thomas Harris, hence his presence at Boreatton Park.[34] Kynaston described him as Thomas Armstrong's son, presumably a reference to Sir Thomas Armstrong, an extremely important player in the conspiracy network, and who had been a leading light in the Action Party, an organisation which effectively replaced the more measured Sealed Knot, until his imprisonment and financial ruin.[35] It is unclear whether or not Kynaston and Armstrong got to London, though presumably they did so, as Commissary General Reynolds wrote to Thurloe to confirm that he had sent the two of them off with Major Packer's troop via Oxford, but there is no further indication of their final destination.[36] As for Eyton, he had escaped from custody in Shrewsbury; Mackworth described how both he and Reynolds had ordered the marshal to secure the prisoner with double bolts to his leg irons, but only single ones were applied and Eyton escaped by tying two sheets together to let himself down out of the window.[37]

In the main, most of those involved in the abortive uprising seemed to be ordinary men, either from the lesser gentry or more often from the urban centres. This was also the case so far as those who defended Shrewsbury were concerned. Crowne, in his letter to Cromwell, indicated that no 'gentlemen had come in yet' so he had had to rely on others that he could trust.[38] Out of the uncle and nephew, Crowne certainly seems to have been the more confident of the two, and in his letter to the Protector it is almost as if he was the governor of the town rather than Mackworth. He was not shy of asking directly for his expenses of £37 to be reimbursed, which was granted without question.[39] Mackworth, on the other hand, although he used his own initiative to protect the town, sought reassurance and support for his actions

[34] *TSP*, Volume III, pp.215-216.
[35] *Ibid.*, pp.21,28-429. *ODNB*, entry by Richard L. Greaves. Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracies*, p.202.
[36] *TSP*, Volume III, pp.336-337.
[37] *Ibid.*, p.706.
[38] *Ibid.*, pp.215-216. *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1655-56, p.588.
[39] *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1655-56, p.588.

from Colonel John Jones as he felt he 'had no other friend to whom I might make applications of this nature.' Mackworth was concerned that he and his men were overstretched, even with the extra troops provided, particularly as he had detained 'many gentlemen of parts and interest in the countrey, that I can lay nothing to their charge, but they have formerly served the Kinge,' and was looking to Jones to push his request for help with this problem.[40] Out of the two local men, however, it was Mackworth who was praised by the newsbooks for his actions as his 'care was so great to preserve the peace of the countrey.'[41]

In fact in 1655, none of the gentry really seemed to want to get involved in either side of the argument. Many former royalists distanced themselves from the action, and Mackworth and Crowne had little help from either the local gentry or central government. There was no Parliament sitting during that time, as it had been disbanded in January 1655, and the county's main voice on the Council of State, Humphrey Mackworth senior, had died the previous December. Even so, despite the lack of resources, the rebellion was quashed before it ever really got started, and county life settled down again, but with many under suspicion and surveillance. Yet, Cromwell was not so sure that the local guards could be trusted, even though there was no evidence to suggest otherwise; he obviously thought that they would be susceptible to bribery as they were the custodians of men that they probably knew. Therefore, on 10 April 1655 he ordered that the current garrison be disbanded and replaced by a troop from Worcester.[42] The uprisings throughout the country during the spring of 1655 triggered the introduction of the regime of the major generals, with James Berry appointed to rule over a wide territory which included Shropshire, another upheaval, which surprisingly the county accepted with relative ease. There were no substantial problems with Berry, so far as the county was concerned, mainly because he covered such a large area that he was often absent from the locality, but his tenure only lasted around eighteen months, before the old system of county governance was restored.

[40] *TSP*, Volume III, p.218.
[41] *The Weekly Intelligencer,* 13-20 March 1655.
[42] *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1655, p.255.

As already described, Berry was still reporting the fallout from the 1655 rebellion in January 1656, when he not only reported that Harris's estate had been secured after alleged embezzlement, but also requested further instructions from London about how to proceed if they acquired further evidence against both Harris and Andrew Newport, as he and his men had still in detention 'divers lewd fellowes' who had been implicated in the plot.[43] Some of these men were still in custody at Shrewsbury over a eighteen months later, when an order came from London to send William Astley, Charles Giffard and a man named Allenson to London to appear before the Council of State, but for what is not clear, as none of them were arrested for their involvement in the 1655 uprising, but presumably Giffard would always have been under suspicion due to his involvement with Charles Stuart in 1651.[44] It had also been reported in at least one newsbook that Sir William Owen, his son Roger and a gentleman by the name of Edward Wen (probably Owen) had been caught up in a country-wide sweep of those disaffected to the Protectorate in June 1655, and they were still incarcerated when Berry arrived in the county. There is, however, no corroborating evidence of this, as certainly Sir William and Roger Owen do not seem to have been questioned about any involvement in the uprising; an Edward Owen was, but he was only eight so it is doubtful that he would have been detained for an overly long period.[45] There may, however, have been grounds for believing that Roger Owen did have some involvement in the plot, as, when questioned, Sir Thomas Harris admitted that he had been at Boreatton with Richard Scriven and a 'Mr Owen, one of Sir William's sons.'[46]

This failure in 1655 did not deter further rumblings of dissention, and a few local men were involved in Booth's rebellion in summer 1659, although from examination of the evidence the appetite for revolution in the county amongst the royalists was severely diminished, but still there were pockets of dissatisfaction. Mackworth junior had been keeping a close watch for any signs of dissention within Shrewsbury, and reported back to the Council of State accordingly. In 1658, he was particularly

[43] *TSP*, Volume IV, pp.393-394.
[44] *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1657-1658, p.549.
[45] *Certain Passages of Everyday Intelligence*, 22-30 June 1655. *HoS*, Volume 1, p.474. *TSP*, Volume III, pp.354-355.
[46] *TSP*, Volume III, p.286.

concerned about the actions of John Tench, and to a lesser extent John Betton, who was then mayor of the town. In October 1658, he reported that Tench, a former Marshal of the town and avid royalist who had 'made a vow never to cut his hair till Charles Stuart reigned again in England,' and who had been sequestered and banished, had returned at the behest of John Betton. Betton himself had been a captain in Parliament's army, but had refused to take the Engagement. He had possibly been appointed as mayor, because at that time the town was in an 'unhappy state.' Betton had sacked the incumbent marshal and had replaced him with Tench, who was spreading disharmony amongst the townspeople and trying to revive structured opposition against Parliament. The mayor was also trying to remove other officials who had taken the Engagement, and in Mackworth's absence had released from custody Jasper Lloyd, who had been incarcerated for speaking treasonous words, and was 'ever a bitter cavalier.'[47] There seems to have been no central response to this missive, nothing further is heard of Tench and Betton stayed in post.

Things were different in neighbouring Cheshire, where Sir George Booth, who had been loyal to Parliament throughout the Commonwealth and most of the Protectorate, but had, along with many others, become increasingly disaffected with the ineffectual restored Rump Parliament, devised an uprising that was to start in his home county, but then was meant to spread countrywide. Many who had supported the Cromwells, both father and son, came from the conservative propertied classes, and were concerned by that stage, that unless the monarchy was restored, the country would dissolve into anarchy on both a social and religious level. They were rebelling not through a love of Charles Stuart, but to maintain their current comfortable and secure lifestyles, which, they were afraid, would be altered for good by the radical Quakers and Anabaptists. The royalists preyed upon those fears, and so this rebellion was unlike the others which had purely involved loyal supporters of the crown.

In 1659, people from all sides of the political spectrum joined together to attempt to stop any radicalisation of society.[48] The uprising was planned to begin on 1 August 1659, starting initially with

[47] *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1658-1659, pp.166-167.
[48] Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracies*, pp.254-256.

Cheshire and its immediate neighbours, and then spreading nationwide, but as before, the rebels were thwarted before any damage was done, due to Thurloe's excellent spy network. In Shropshire, Charles Littleton, a friend of Andrew Newport, co-ordinated events. The plan was for the rebels to meet at the Littleton family seat at Hagley, before moving onto Bridgnorth, and then, with a show of great ceremony, to the Wrekin, where more followers could be rallied to the cause. In all about sixty men joined Littleton's band, and they were joined in Shropshire by Sir Thomas Harris and Henry Norwood, who had both travelled up from London to assist. It was a feeble effort, however, and only one parliamentary trooper was seized during the journey and stripped of his horse, arms and 12s 6d in money.[49] Harris had apparently been released from his last spell of imprisonment only three days before, and Norwood had also spent periods of incarceration having been implicated in the Gerard Plot of 1654. As early as March 1658, Clarendon had been confident that Harris and Andrew Newport would join together to seize Shrewsbury, but in fact from the evidence of land deals, Newport was living in London at that time, and was seemingly not particularly bothered with planning any rebellious acts in his home county.[50]

On 25 July 1659, Harris and Norwood headed north to Cheshire.[51] Norwood was a Worcestershire man, who had fled the country at the end of the second civil war. He and the Littletons had also been arrested in January 1655, presumably as a precautionary measure, but Clarendon noted that Sir Harry Littleton and his brother had both been busy in July 1659, just before events began.[52] Littleton's group got to the Wrekin where they camped overnight, but, for some reason, he fled in the night, leaving the group behind, but also returning the prisoner's horse to him, along with 20s presumably as some form of apology or recompense.[53] The remainder of the group had no option but to disburse, but several were arrested near Shifnal. Littleton himself fled the country, ending up in Calais the following month.[54]

[49] *Ibid.*, pp.272-273. *CCSP*, Volume IV, p.350.
[50] SA:2922/11/1/99 (assignment of mortgage by demise on the Boreatton estate formerly owned by Sir Thomas Harris.
[51] *CCSP*, Volume IV, pp.21 296.
[52] *Ibid.*, p.143. *CCSP*, Volume IV, p.284.
[53] *CCSP*, Volume IV, p.350.
[54] *Ibid.*, p.389.

Sir Thomas Myddelton and his sons became properly involved in the uprising. Sir Thomas invited Booth's men to Chirk castle, where they set up camp. Booth himself was in Chester at that time, and Myddelton went to join him, leaving his home secured by the royalists, but not before he had invited the local Oswestry militia to join up with the rebels, something they had declined to do. Why, after all the years of being loyal to Parliament, Myddelton did a complete, and public, *volte face*, is a mystery. Edmund Ludlow thought it could be due to old age, as he was nearly eighty at the time, and when he had last spoken to Myddelton, he had 'reassured me of his resolution to continue steadfast in the interest of the Commonwealth.' Ludlow did, however, concede that it could have been 'through the importunity of others, or through the natural depravity of his own heart' which made him proclaim Charles Stuart as King when he was passing through Wrexham on his way to meet up with Booth at Chester.[55] Myddelton was surely too canny an operator to nail his colours to the mast without some reassurances, and these could well have come from Charles Stuart himself. Myddelton had apparently expressed an interest in serving the future King, and his thoughts were forwarded to the exiled would-be monarch in Brussels by the Reverend John Barwick. Charles replied that he had 'never been without Thoughts of him [Myddelton] and the Use he would be to me,' asking Barwick to liaise with Myddelton and ascertain which gentlemen he could bring with him to support the cause.[56] From the tone of Barwick's memoirs, Myddelton had already made up his mind to change allegiance, without much persuasion, and he was just looking for a conduit to the monarchy. Certainly, if that is correct, he was not persuaded to join the rebellion by Barwick, as Underdown suggested.[57] By 10 August Myddelton, along with Booth, Colonel Randolph Egerton and Robert Werden, were all publicly declared to be traitors in every market town and church in the country.[58]

[55] Edmund Ludlow, *Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow*, Volume II (London,1740), p.262.
[56] Peter Barwick, *The Life of the Reverend Dr John Barwick, sometime Fellow of St John's College in Cambridge*, (London, 1724), pp.181-183.
[57] Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracies*, p.275.
[58] *CJ*, Volume 7, 1651-1660, p.754.

By 24 August, it was all over, Sir Thomas Myddelton had fled and so was not captured, but his son, also Thomas, who was the governor of the newly-formed garrison at Chirk, had ordered Colonel Robert Broughton to negotiate terms with Colonel Jerome Sankey for Parliament. The terms agreed stipulated that all the defenders of Chirk surrender with their arms, and no further harm be occasioned to the Commonwealth. Furthermore, the commissioned officers were to be allowed two months' liberty, either to make their peace with Parliament or leave the country. Colonel John Lambert was ordered to seize all arms, and finally to supervise the demolition of the castle (something that never took place).[59] Thomas Myddelton junior, and his younger brothers Richard, Charles and Tymothy, all later petitioned Parliament for leniency.[60] Their father, however, never seems to have been detained, although he suffered financially for his exploits. The sequestration process of his estates began in September 1659; all witnesses were ordered to be examined, and full details be provided of his, and his sons', estates both in Wales and in Shropshire, Yorkshire and Cheshire including the iron works he partly owned with Thomas Mytton. The Compounding Committee in London also determined that no claims on the estates would be allowed, and all Myddelton's debtors had to pay their dues.[61] In any event Myddelton's disgrace did not last long, and his traitorous actions were soon forgotten, for on 10 March 1660 he and his son Thomas were appointed as commissioners of the Militia in Denbighshire.[62]

The rebellion did not last long, nor did it progress very far, for as in the past there were strong words but no deeds. In fact, Shropshire was never really troubled by the uprising at all. Harris was seemingly not so bothered with his home county, having only spent a brief time there in August, and, presumably because he had spent so much time in London, his popularity in some quarters was far less than it had been in the early 1650s. In fact, he had leased his estates at Boreatton, Leebotwood, Ratlinghope and Birch for £2,000 to Richard Hampden, a London draper in December 1654, (although he obviously had access to them in the spring of 1655), and so, to a certain extent, was cutting his county ties.[63]

[59] *Ibid.*, p.769. *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1659-60, p.170.
[60] *CJ*, Volume 7, 1651-1660, p.791.
[61] *CCC*, Part 5, pp.3246-3247.
[62] *CJ*, Volume 7, p.870.
[63] SA:2922/11/1/105.

Furthermore, although there were hopes of Andrew Newport's involvement, he was also quite happy to take a back seat, and, in any event, by 22 July 1659 he was under arrest and was being held incommunicado.[64] The authorities were on high alert anyway during the summer of 1659; in July, letters from the Council of State had gone out to all the county militias warning them that 'the common enemy is drawing together with designs against the peace.' All those in charge were to gather their troops together, and obey all further centralised orders, and in return they would receive full army pay.[65]

In Shropshire, Major Edmund Wareinge (more commonly spelt as either Waring or Wareing) was put in charge of the militia. He was not a native of Shropshire, and is not to be confused with Edmund Waring of Owlbury who would have been a peculiar choice for such a position, because he would only have been in his early twenties in 1659, and came from a family with royalist sympathies. Walter Waring, Edmund's father, had his estate sequestered in 1646, and was fined £737 (later reduced to £511).[66] On the other hand Waring was connected to the Charltons of Ludford (his sister Letice was the second wife of Sir Job Charlton), and the family had obviously redeemed themselves sufficiently in the eyes of Parliament by 1656, as they were excused from paying the Decimation Tax imposed to fund the local militias.[67] The Owlbury Waring was, in fact, elected as MP for Bishop's Castle in 1660, and was later recommended to be a Knight of the royal Oak for Montgomeryshire, presumably in recognition of his late father Walter's loyalty. This was an order proposed by Charles II to reward those men who had been loyal and supportive of him during his exile, but was not proceeded with for fear of promoting jealousies and divisions.[68]

The Edmund Wareinge who was the leader of the militia was Suffolk born and bred, his family hailing from Grotton (Groton) near to Sudbury. He had no long-term links with Shropshire, having appeared as a commissioner and JP within the county in the mid-1650s. In fact, the first record of him siting was

[64] *Ibid.*, p.309. *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1659-60, p.38.
[65] *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1659-60, pp.15-16.
[66] *CCC*, Part 2, p.1184.
[67] SA:X7381/145/849. *CCC*, Part 2, p.1184.
[68] *HoP*,1660-1690, Volume III, pp.671-671. *The Cambrian Quarterly Magazine and Celtic Repertory*, Volume 2 (London, 1830), pp.166,176.

at the October Quarter Sessions in 1654.[69] He bought an estate at Humphreston near Shifnal from Lady Briggs, and rapidly became an important official within the county, being elected as MP for Bridgnorth in 1656 and 1658. It is believed that his rapid rise in prominence was due to him being an Anabaptist, in a time when those who had more Independent, or some would say more radical religious views, were in the ascendant. Wareinge was appointed as sheriff of the county from 1657 until 1659, and at some point, during the last year of the Protectorate took over the governorship of Shrewsbury from Humphrey Mackworth junior.[70] The reason behind the transfer is unclear, Mackworth was confirmed as the governor on 14 January 1659 without objection, but on 13 August, the Speaker of the House of Commons, William Lenthall, wrote to Wareinge transferring the position to him and giving him the authority to defend the town.[71]

On 26 July 1659, a new Militia Act was passed to try and forestall the forthcoming crisis.[72] The commissioners for Shropshire were a mixture of the old guard, who had served on many of the local committees throughout the Interregnum, alongside new members, some of whom had been active in local administration during previous years. The full list of commissioners, alongside Wareinge, was as follows: Sir Humphrey Briggs, Robert Wallop, Robert Corbet, Andrew Lloyd, Samuel More, John Corbet, Creswell Tayleur, Thomas Kettleby, Charles Langford, Phillip Young, Lancelot Lee, Thomas Baker, Roger Evans, Francis Harris, Edward Cresset, William Botterell, Richard Smith, Thomas Hayes, Samuel Swanwick, John Ashton and Job Charlton. They were joined by newcomers Robert Salloway, John Groom, Richard Hennedge (Heneage/Hennage), Samuel Jones, Rowland Hunt junior, Edmond Wilde, William and Phillip Cotton, John Betton, Charles Doughty, John Brown, Richard Griffith, and Thomas Lockhart. There is little, if any, surviving evidence about the personal backgrounds of many of these new appointees, but some had been involved either in the local militia or local administration

[69] Offley Wakeman, *Quarter Sessions*, p.16.
[70] SA:X7381/76/392A. H T Weyman, 'members of Parliament for Bridgnorth,' *TSANHS*, 4th Series, Volume V (1915), pp.1-76, (pp.60-61).
[71] SA:215/70. BodL: Tanner MS, 51, fol.142
[72] *A & O*, Volume 2, pp.1320,1331.

before. Hennedge, Doughty and John Betton had all been captains in the militia, and Richard Griffith was one of the Chamberlains of Shrewsbury in 1658.[73]

John Groom came from the south of the county, and must have been relatively wealthy as he had previously bought two farms from the sequestered Craven estate. He was probably also the man who helped Botterell defend Ludlow. Rowland Hunt was Thomas Hunt's son, John Brown is a very common name, but he could have been the Shrewsbury butcher, who was admitted as a burgess of the town in 1647. There is nothing known about the Cottons, as it is doubtful that they came from the Combermere Cottons who had supported the crown in the war, but there was a family by that surname that included a William, who came from just over the border in Cheshire. There is, however, a William Cotton noted as coming from Birchall in Wybunbury parish, and a Philip Cotton who was later described as a gentleman of Drayton, and who appeared at the Court Leet of Viscount Kilmorrey in 1654, which covered the area of Betton, Great and Little Drayton and Norton.[74] The antecedents of Thomas Lockhart (Lochard) can only be guessed at, as there were families of that name both at Greete and Hodnet.

The commissioner named as Robert Salloway was in fact Richard Salway/Salwey. The Salway/Salwey family of Richard's Castle are often referred to in official paperwork as Salloway. Salway was a major in the parliamentarian army well known for his radical views. He was elected as MP for Worcestershire during the Nominated Assembly, and although appointed to the Council of State he did not agree with Cromwell's policies, and did not sit. His family owned property at Richard's Castle just over the border in Herefordshire, and would have been known to many of the local commissioners.[75] He also was a JP for Shropshire who sat at the Shrewsbury Assizes in May 1654. The name Samuel Jones is common enough, but it can be presumed that the person referred to was the MP for Shrewsbury from 1656 onwards, and cousin of Thomas Jones, who was appointed as the Town Clerk and the second MP for

[73] SA:3365/8 Assembly Book B for Doughty entry 115. See also H.E. Forrest, ed., *Shrewsbury Burgess Roll*, (Shrewsbury, 1924), p.85. *CSPD*, Interregnum,1650, pp.505-506 for Hennage. SA:3365/605/1-3 for Betton. SA:3365/601/21-28 for Griffiths.
[74] SA:327/2/2/92/3-4. SA:4708/Microfilm 204/Frame 10-12.
[75] W.R. Williams, *The Parliamentary History of the County of Worcester* (Hereford, 1897), pp.43-44.

the town in 1660.[76] Finally, Edmund Wi[y]lde can only be surmised as being the Droitwich MP who was living at the family estate at Glazeley near Bridgnorth. The Wyldes were Worcestershire clothiers, who had turned their attentions to politics. Edmund (referred to by Williams as Edward Wilde) had been elected in 1647, and took the Solemn League and Covenant on 9 June 1648, the same day as Pierrepoint. He was the cousin of the Serjeant at Law for Parliament, John Wylde.[77]

Wareinge may have held important positions in the county, but he was very unsure of both some of those appointed on the Militia Commission, and the townspeople of Shrewsbury. He believed that some of the appointed commissioners would not serve and, so far as Shrewsbury was concerned, he was afraid that if the town were attacked, it would not be properly defended due to royalist sympathies. This was purely on the basis that the justices of the peace 'refused to defend the town,' which Wareinge took to mean that they would support any uprising. Which commissioners he was unsure of was not made clear, and his more radical religious views may have made him warier than others would necessarily have been. Shrewsbury may have remained untouched by the rebellion, but it certainly ended up as a repository for all the miscreants who found themselves detained. Wareinge reported to the Council of State that he had eight rebels in custody, one of whom was Littleton's brother.[78] The Earl of Derby, who was also taken prisoner during the rebellion, was transferred to Shrewsbury under guard, where he remained until being sent to London in Wareinge's company on 13 September 1659.[79] Both Wareinge in Shrewsbury and Botterell in Ludlow received praise from the Council of State for their defence of the county with limited resources, especially as the Ludlow magazine had to be bolstered by supplies from Shrewsbury until relief could be gained from General Lambert's forces (Lambert having been charged with overall control of the militia in the county by the Council of State). The Council was probably cognisant that the area was a potential powder keg, particularly with both Chester and Chirk in royalist hands, and recommended that the volunteer troops that had been taken into the militia be

[76] *HoP*, 1660-1690, pp. 665-666. SA:215/70.
[77] SA-IMG650. *CJ*, Volume 5, p.203. David Underdown, *Pride's Purge* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p.390. Williams, *Worcester*, pp.123-124.
[78] *CCSP*, Volume IV, p.309.
[79] *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1659-60, p.193.

paid for their exact time of service, which may have also been some form of apology to Wareinge who had been ordered to disband his troop and send them home in June of that year.[80]

After the abortive rebellion, the only consequences within the county appeared to be financial, and, as was seen with Myddelton, old wounds seemed to heal very rapidly. Perhaps it was because the writing was on the wall so far as the survival of the Republic was concerned, and after nearly two decades of conflict it was felt that the time had come to draw a line under past differences and return to some semblance of normality. Upon the restoration of the King the first thing that Shrewsbury did on 6 July 1660 was to reinstate those members of the corporation who had fallen from grace during the Commonwealth and Protectorate. Edmund Wareinge was imprisoned in Shrewsbury for a short period, before being released by the county's Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Sir Richard Ottley, much to the concern of the new Lord Lieutenant, Lord Newport. The garrisons at Shrewsbury and Ludlow and their attendant forces were discharged, and for most people there was an acceptance that the Republic had finally come to an end. Even so there were still rumours of a further uprising, this time by some of the ejected ministers, and the old supporters of Parliament such as John Buttery, Charles Doughty and John Betton. Yet nothing further seems to have occurred and things slowly settled down, and particularly so far as business was concerned former enemies put aside their differences and traded together without any adverse consequences. By the time Shrewsbury's new charter was confirmed by Charles II in 1664, all sides were working together. The famously neutral Jonathon Langley was mayor, and those such as Richard Griffiths and George Llewelyn, former Parliament men, served as common councilmen, alongside committed royalists, Timothy Tourneur and Edward Kynaston.[81]

[80] *Ibid.*, pp.77,145. *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1658-9, pp.365-366,107-108.
[81] *HoS*, Volume 1, pp.479-487.

# Changes in Personnel

There were substantial changes in personnel during the Protectorate years from a local level upwards. In Shropshire, the MPs changed, as did the governor of Shrewsbury, but the main alteration was the appointment of James Berry as the county's major general in 1655. In Shrewsbury Humphrey Mackworth senior left the town after being appointed to Cromwell's Council of State on 2 February 1654, and making his first appearance on 7 February of that year. There is no indication why he was chosen to sit on the Council, apart from his obvious loyalty to Parliament, and Oliver Cromwell, throughout the years. Mackworth was active within the Council and sat on numerous committees, but left few personal papers which would give any indication as to his political views. If Edmund Ludlow's comments are to be believed and his support for the army in December 1648 had remained unchanged, then that made him an ideal candidate for the Council of State in later years. There are no doubts about his religious views, and he can be, in part, credited for the propagation of Puritanism within Shrewsbury. From some of his later career, however, he would have seemed to have altered his Presbyterian views, to become more of an Independent, although there was little sign of any radicalism on his part.

The lack of personal papers makes him a hard character to decipher, but his alleged support for the army and the fact that he was chosen to sit on the Committee for the Better Propagation of the Gospel in Wales in 1650, along with another Shropshire man Leighton Owen, which brought him into contact with millenarian preachers such as Vavasour Powell, does paint a picture of someone who became more radical in his views.[82] Prior to that he had served on the first classis for Shropshire, which was certainly a Presbyterian-based ideal, but in 1654 he was appointed to sit as a commissioner for both Cheshire, Shropshire and North Wales, to consider the fitness of ministers and masters. Under this provision, the classis system was abolished completely to be replaced by a structure of triers and ejectors.[83] There was

[82] *A & O,* Volume 2, p.343.
[83] *Ibid.,* pp.969,974,976.

no doubt that he was loyal to the parliamentarian cause throughout the war, and his prime concern throughout the 1640s, in fact up until his promotion in 1654, was the welfare of the county. Perhaps this strong political and religious commitment explains his high level of attendance at the Council from his appointment until the beginning of December 1654, during which period he was only absent from seventeen sittings out of a possible one hundred and seventy-six.[84] He died that month very unexpectedly and was buried in Westminster Abbey on 26 December, but his body was disinterred upon the restoration and the corpse dumped into a communal pit.[85] As governor of Shrewsbury, he was replaced initially by his son Humphrey and thereafter in the summer of 1659 by Edmund Wareinge.

After the disaster that was the Nominated Assembly, Cromwell's Protectorate allowed for the return of elected Parliaments, so MPs were again elected by the local burgesses. The first Protectorate Parliament ran from 3 September 1654 until 22 January 1655, but the Instrument of Government had substantially reduced the number of MPs, so that the Shropshire corporations found themselves with only four representatives, one each for Bridgnorth and Ludlow and two for Shrewsbury. No seats were allowed for Much Wenlock and Bishop's Castle, but the number of MPs for the shire was increased from two to four.[86] The new members for Shrewsbury were Humphrey Mackworth junior and Richard Cheshire. Born in 1631, Mackworth was the third son of Humphrey Mackworth senior, his elder brother Thomas being MP for Ludlow, and Humphrey junior was also the Shrewsbury Town Clerk from 1652, which was possibly (given the fact he would have been twenty-one at the time) a position gained through nepotism. He later became governor of the town, taking over from his father who had settled in London as a Member of the Council of State. He was also returned to Parliament for the town in 1656 and 1658/9.[87] Richard Cheshire came from the Abbey Foregate area of the town, and was a glover by trade. A churchwarden of St Julian's in 1637 and 1641, he was also one of the assistants of the corporation,

[84] *CSPD*, Interregnum,1654, pp. xxxvi-xliv.
[85] *ODNB*, entry by Peter Gaunt.
[86] S.R. Gardiner, ed., *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press,1906), p.408.
[87] H.T. Weyman, 'Shrewsbury Members of Parliament,' *TSANHS*, 4th Series, Volume 12, (1929-30), pp.213-4. SA:3365/599/25.

and in 1652 was appointed as mayor of the town. In 1654, he sat on the Shropshire Commission for Scandalous Ministers.[88]

The MP for Ludlow during 1654 was a local man, John Aston, who was an alderman and burgess of the town corporation, as well as bailiff in 1649 and 1652. He was very involved in local affairs and tried to press the question of the survival of the Court in the Marches, an important source of town revenue, with Cromwell, whilst he was a sitting MP.[89] Finally, the burgesses of Bridgnorth returned Humphrey Mackworth's brother-in-law, William Crowne, as their MP.[90] The MPs for the shire were the old, and reliable, favourites Humphrey Mackworth senior, who obviously only enjoyed a short tenure in office as he died in December 1654, Thomas Mytton, and Robert Corbet of Stanwardine. They were joined by Philip Young [Yonge] of Caynton near Shifnal. Yonge came from a long-established Shropshire family, and was married to the daughter of Robert Corbet; he was also a local JP, but he was probably elected because of his family connections. He seems to have made little impact in Parliament, but he continued to represent the shire throughout the Protectorate, being further elected in 1656 and 1659.[91]

The second Protectorate Parliament commenced on 17 September 1656. Although it was not strictly necessary to call an assembly for another year, Cromwell was advised that the best way to raise the revenue that the country so desperately needed, was to call another Parliament. The Commons sat until 26 June 1657 and then from 20 January until 4 February 1658.[92] The number of representatives for Shropshire remained the same, as the Instrument of Government was still in place, but there was a change of MPs in some boroughs. Bridgnorth, as we know, was represented by Wareinge, and John Aston continued to represent Ludlow on his own. The returning MP for Shrewsbury, Humphrey

[88] Weyman, 'Shrewsbury MPs', pp.213-214.
[89] H.T. Weyman, 'The Ludlow Members of Parliament,' *TSANHS*, 2nd Series, Volume VII (1895), pp.1-54, (pp.29-30).
[90] H.T. Weyman, 'Bridgnorth MPs', p.60.
[91] *HV*, Part II, pp.517-520. Offley Wakeman, *Abstract of the Orders made by the Court of Quarter Sessions for Shropshire*, Shrewsbury (Shrewsbury: Shropshire County Council, undated) p.vii. H.T. Weyman, 'Shropshire members of Parliament,' *TSANHS*, 4th Series, Volume XI (1927-8), pp.153-184 (pp.181-184).
[92] Willis Browne, *Notitia Parliamentaria* (London, 1750), p.272.

Mackworth junior, was joined by Samuel Jones, who was the cousin of Thomas and William Jones, who both later became MPs for the town. The Jones family had originated in Denbighshire before settling in Shrewsbury as drapers. Samuel's father Isaac had moved to London where he became a Merchant Taylor, and his mother Elizabeth was the daughter of Richard Prince of Abbey Foregate, the former high sheriff of the county whose grandfather had built the extravagant Prince's Mansion, also known as Whitehall.[93] Richard Prince had reluctantly, according to him, been a royalist commissioner of Array, but his son Francis (Samuel's uncle) fought and died for the parliamentary cause.[94] Samuel had also fought for Parliament during the war. He sat on the Shropshire Militia Commission before his election, and was returned for a second term as the town's MP in 1660. Upon the restoration, his loyalty to the King was not in any doubt; he and others lent £2,000 to the Court, after the City of London had refused the loan. He was also appointed to a variety of committees during the first months of Charles II reign. These included establishing who was eligible for a pardon under the Act of Oblivion and Indemnity and who should be excluded as regicides.[95] His service was obviously valued, as on 2 September 1660 he was knighted for his services to the crown.[96] Finally, three new MPs of the shire were elected, Thomas Mackworth, Samuel More and Andrew Lloyd, to sit alongside the returning Philip Yonge.

The 1656 Parliament was controversial due to the exclusion of what is estimated to be over one hundred MPs. These exclusions had nothing to do with the Protector Oliver Cromwell, but seem to have been decisions made purely by his Council of State. Yet Cromwell was concerned that the election would return some members who were opposed to the ideals of the Protectorate, despite their support for Parliament, and so advised the local major generals to keep a close watch on how they were progressing, and if possible try to ensure only suitable candidates were elected. The advent of the Protectorate had meant a partial return to the old format of elections, which was much welcomed, but there were

[93] SA:PH/S/13/W/4A/7.
[94] *CJ*, Volume 5, 1646-1648, p.305.
[95] *CJ*, Volume 8, 1660-167, pp.27,45,59.
[96] *HoP*,1660-1690, Volume III, pp. 663-665. Weyman, 'Shrewsbury MPs', p.214. George Marshall, ed., *Le Neve's Pedigrees of the Knights* (London, 1873), p.109.

adaptations and alterations to the qualifications for both voters and candidates. Various clauses in the Instrument of Government not only put restrictions on who could stand, sit and serve as an MP, including the perhaps dangerously broad requirement of clause seventeen that they be of 'known integrity, fearing God, and of good conversation,' but also empowered the Council of State to examine those newly elected and exclude MPs deemed not to meet these qualifications.[97] Only a handful of MPs have been excluded from the first Protectorate Parliament, men who were clearly unfit to sit, either through their royalist sympathies or moral turpitude, but in 1656 these constitutional provisions were used far more sweepingly.

Shropshire experienced no exclusions in the first Parliament, but four men were deemed unfit to sit in the second, namely Samuel Jones, Samuel Mo[o]re, John Aston and Andrew Lloyd.[98] There is no evidence that their returns were false or fraudulent, but they were caught up in clause seventeen. When the question of the exclusion of MPs from all over the country was raised in Parliament on 19 September, there was much debate, and after two days of arguing, it was finally agreed that each excluded member appeal directly, by way of petition, to the Council of State to convince it to reverse its original decision.[99] The outcome concerning the four Shropshire members is baffling, particularly so far as More and Lloyd were concerned. Egloff has argued that, as most of the excluded MPs could not be barred for any specific reason under the Instrument of Government, the Council of State used the vagueness of clause seventeen to justify its decision to ensure that those MPs who were not particularly loyal to the army be barred from asserting their influence in Parliament. She saw it as part of the power struggle that was ongoing at that time between the military and civilian factions of the Protectorate. Many of those excluded had not been actively disloyal to the Protectorate or shown loyalty to the crown, but the Council acted to eliminate the 'disenchanted parliamentarians, unaligned gentry, neutralists or

[97] Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, pp.410-411, the relevant clauses being numbers XIV, XV, XVII, XVIII. Peter Gaunt, 'Cromwell's Purge? Exclusions and the First Protectorate Parliament,' *Parliamentary History*, 6, Part 1 (1987), pp.3-4.
[98] BodL: Rawlinson MS: A73 fol. 317r.
[99] *CJ*, Volume 7, pp.425-426. Weyman, H. T., 'Shropshire members of Parliament,' *TSANHS*, 4th Series, Volume XI (1927-8), pp.153-184, (p.182).

Presbyterians.'[100] That still does not explain the Shropshire expulsions, but Major General Berry wrote to Cromwell from Shrewsbury in August 1656, concerning the election process that was ongoing. He indicated that 'some dissatisfied persons attempt to be chosen' but that those unnamed gentlemen 'want nothing but the seale of a Parliament to all proceedings; and if you would but make them lords then they would give you leave to be King.'[101]

The major generals certainly tried to assert their influence so far as the 1656 elections were concerned. Berry had already written to Thurloe in January 1656 from Shrewsbury, indicating that he was not happy with some of the local officials, particularly those newly appointed to the latest Commission of the Peace, going so far as to chide Thurloe for his decisions. Yet of those MPs excluded, only Samuel More was also on the Commission of the Peace, and he had been appointed in 1649.[102] Perhaps More, Lloyd, Aston and Jones displeased Berry in some way, as there was no other obvious reason for any of their exclusions. It was, perhaps, natural for the Council to have some qualms about a totally new member such as Jones, who had some tenuous links to royalism through his grandfather Richard Prince, but even then the Compounding Committee had ordered that Prince's fine be reduced as he had agreed to pay off the debts of his parliamentarian son Francis who had been killed during the war, and he had been discharged from his delinquency in 1647.[103] In the case of Jones, there is no clear evidence that he subsequently sat. Aston, however, probably sat. A burgess from Ludlow, he had never achieved high office in county officialdom, except for his work in his immediate locality through the corporation, though his connections with Ludlow while it had been held for the crown for much of the war, during which as a member of The Fifteen since 1631 he had naturally been part of the royalist machinery, may have led to concerns.[104] But he must have persuaded the Council of State that his exclusion was a mistake very rapidly, because on 23 September 1656 he was appointed to the Committee for Irish Affairs, and the following month began, with others, to investigate the proper implementation of the ale

[100] Carol S. Egloff, 'The search for a Cromwellian Settlement: Exclusion from the Second Protectorate Parliament, Part 1,' *Parliamentary History*, 17 (1998), pp.179-197, (pp.181-184).
[101] *TSP*, Volume V, p.313.
[102] *TSP*, Volume IV, p.393. TNA:C231/6 p.160.
[103] *CCC*, Part 2, p.1610. *HJ*, Volume 7, p.459.
[104] Michael Faraday, *Ludlow 1085-1660* (Chichester: Phillimore & Co., 1991), p.197.

and beer excise. One interesting twist, however, was that in November a Mr Whitmill was paid by William Morgan to serve a subpoena on Aston about a court case. No details of the case are given, but William Morgan was a serial complainant, as well as defendant, before the Wenlock bailiff's Court, certainly throughout the 1630s. So, if there was a hint of debt, although an MP could not be sued for such, then that may have explained the Council of State's initial decision.[105]

Samuel More and Andrew Lloyd had been loyal supporters of Parliament in the county since the very beginning of the war, and had sat on several committees from 1643 onwards with no indication of any difficulties. Both had been colonels in the parliamentarian army; More had been trusted to be governor of four garrisons, Hopton, Ludlow, Montgomery and Hereford, and Lloyd had overseen the garrison at Bridgnorth, and had helped to put down the 1655 rebellion in the county. The only unsavoury blemish on More's character was the treatment of his children by his first wife Katherine. He had married young to an older cousin, Katherine More of Larden, who, it was claimed, had already entered a marriage contract with a man called Blakeway before her nuptials to Samuel. The More children were seemingly a product of that relationship as they bore a striking resemblance to Blakeway, and so were sent to the Americas on The Mayflower as bonded labour, where three out of the four of them died. Samuel and Katherine had separated in 1620, but had remained officially married until her death in 1625. He remarried and had a second family, and so by 1656 had certainly established his moral credentials. Weyman believed that he was part of a conspiracy to get rid of Cromwell, hence the fact that he was excluded, but there appears to be little evidence to support this theory. There is no evidence that More refused to sit on the Commonwealth Commission of the Peace in any of his jurisdictions, and his home Quarter Sessions would have been those of Bishop's Castle of which no archival evidence remains. More remained popular and trusted locally. He continued on the county committees for assessment and for the militia during the Protectorate, and was appointed to the Committee for the Ejection of Scandalous, Ignorant and Insufficient Ministers and Schoolmasters in August 1654.[106] At various times

[105] *CJ*, Volume 7, pp.427,445,461.
[106] *ODNB*, entry by Conal Condren. *A & O*, Volume 2, pp.974,1078,1331,1377,1432.

during that period he was also appointed to committees in Montgomeryshire, Radnorshire, North Wales and Worcestershire.[107]

Egloff described More as a Presbyterian royalist, a phrase she expanded upon to describe those who, even before 1656, had become opposed to Cromwell and who had pursued some sort of association with royalists.[108] More may have been a Presbyterian, but there is no evidence in the 1650s of any royalist associations. He was, however, granted the governorship of Ludlow castle by Charles II, giving some credence to the theory. The date of the appointment is unclear, but he certainly seems to have been *in situ* on 3 July 1660.[109] His name also appeared (along with those of Lloyd, Jones and Aston) in the anonymous and much disputed tract allegedly composed and signed by all the excluded MPs, which criticised Cromwell, accusing the Protector of abusing the people's fundamental rights and liberties to have a representative elected by them in Parliament, and denouncing him as having 'assumed and absolute arbitrary soveraignty (as if he came down from the throne of God).'[110] More's reaction to his name being endorsed on that document is unknown, but certainly Herbert Morley and Sir John Fagge, two excluded Sussex MPs, were amazed at their inclusions.[111] When the tract was composed is unclear; it was read out in the commons on 22 September, yet the day afterwards, it was business as normal for Aston, putting even more credence on the supposition that most of the alleged signatories had no involvement with it whatsoever.[112] It is not clear whether More did petition the Council for his inclusion and the evidence is sparse.

[107] *A & O*, Volume 2, pp.1078,1384,1441,1444,1448.
[108] Carol S. Egloff, 'The search for a Cromwellian Settlement: Exclusion from the Second Protectorate Parliament, Part 2,' *Parliamentary History*, 17, Part 3 (1998), pp. 301-321, (p.314).
[109] *LJ*, Volume 11, p.82.
[110] Anon, *to all the worthy gentlemen who are duly chosen for the Parliament, which intended to meet at Westminster the 17 September 1656* (1656).
[111] Patrick Little and David L. Smith, *Parliaments and Politics during the Cromwellian Protectorate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.92.
[112] Bulstrode Whitelocke, *Memorials of the English Affairs from the Beginning of the Reign of Charles the First to the Happy Restoration of King Charles the Second*, Volume IV, reprinted (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1853), pp.274-280.

Why Lloyd was initially excluded remains a complete mystery; there is the assumption that his political views had changed so much as to make him unacceptable to the Council of State, but again if that was so, then why was he appointed to the Assessment Committee in July 1657, and again in January 1660, and the Militia Commissions in 1659 and 1660.[113] Egloff believed that he was readmitted to Parliament, but when is not clear and no firm evidence of him taking his seat during the first session of this Parliament is adduced. On the other hand, it is quite possible that all four Shropshire MPs took their seats during the brief second session of the Parliament, in the opening weeks of 1658, by which time the Council's power to vet MPs had been lost under the revised constitution and the exclusions of September 1656 had lapsed. For example, in February 1658 the *Commons Journal* refers to the appointment of a Mr More and a Mr Lloyd to a Committee of the House. This Mr Lloyd may well have been Andrew, and not Charles Lloyd MP for Montgomeryshire, who was also excluded for a short time in 1656, as he is generally addressed by his full name in the *Journal*.[114] Mr More must be Samuel, as he was the only MP of that name in the Parliament.[115]

The third, and final, Protectorate Parliament was a very short-lived affair, which sat after the death of Oliver Cromwell in September 1658. His successor, and son, Richard Cromwell, called the final Parliament of the Protectorate just over two months after his father's death, to try and alleviate the growing financial crisis faced by the country. It first sat on 27 January 1659 and was dissolved on 22 April 1659. Although the old election franchise remained in place, the Instrument of Government had been amended by the Humble Petition and Advice which had been introduced in 1657. This had been drawn up by MPs, rather than an unelected body, established the Other or Upper House, very like the House of Lords, and prevented the exclusion of MPs, apart from with the consent of the Commons.[116] There were some new additions to the stable of county MPs; the shire was still represented by Yonge and Mackworth, Samuel Jones kept his seat, and was joined by his cousin William; Edmund Wareinge also kept his position, but Bridgnorth sent an extra MP as well. There was a complete change in Ludlow,

[113] *A & O*, Volume 2, pp.1078,1331,1337,1441.
[114] Browne, *Notitia Parliamentaria,* pp.268,281.
[115] *CJ*, Volume 7, p.600. Browne, *Notitia Parliamentaria*, pp.272-284.
[116] Gardiner, *Constitutional Document*, pp.447-459.

which sent two new members to London, as did Bishop's Castle, one of them being the previously excluded Samuel More, but Wenlock only returned one new MP. The new MPs were William Jones (Shrewsbury), William Oakeley (Bishop's Castle), John Humfry (Bridgnorth), Sir Francis Lawley (Wenlock) and Job Charlton and Samuel Baldwyn (Ludlow). [117]Some of them had royalist connections, which probably under the Instrument of Government would have seen them excluded, but none of them had fought in the wars, or aided or abetted others in the same, nor had they been involved in any rebellions against Parliament, which would have been an automatic bar to selection under the Humble Petition.

William Jones was the eldest son of Edward Jones of Shrewsbury, who had been the steward of the town; William himself had been involved in corporation affairs since the beginning of the war.[118] William Oakeley was from Oakeley in the very south of the county, and was the second son of Richard Oakeley the royalist captain, who had raised a troop of dragoons. Richard Oakeley had denied any specific action against Parliament to the Committee of Compounding. He pleaded that he had given the parliamentary committee £100 before Shrewsbury had fallen in 1645 (in fact he had been assessed by the Committee for the Advancement of Money for £500 in December 1645, a sum later reduced to £150 which was paid by him), and was deeply in debt, after his estates had been plundered by royalist soldiers, and he had been imprisoned by them at the Ludlow garrison. Despite all this, he was subject to sequestration proceedings and had to compound in the sum of £460 in July 1646.[119] There is some doubt about Humfry as the returns are not complete, and apparently, he was also elected as MP for Midhurst but preferred his Shropshire seat. He was the son of Colonel John Humfry who was Bradshaw's swordbearer, but he was a commissioner in Middlesex and seems to have spent no time in the county in an official capacity.[120] Sir Francis Lawley came from Spoonhill near Ellesmere. The son of Sir Thomas Lawley, he was married to the daughter of Sir Thomas Whitmore, a royalist sympathiser who

[117] Weyman, 'Shrewsbury MPs', 'Wenlock MPs', 'Ludlow MPs', 'Bridgnorth MPs', 'Bishop's Castle MPs', 'MPs for Shropshire'.
[118] Weyman, 'Shrewsbury MPs', p.215.
[119] *CCC*, Part 2, p.1119. W.D.G. Fletcher, 'The Sequestration Papers of Richard Oakeley of Oakeley,' *TSANHS*, 4th Series, Volume XI (1923-4), pp.193-208. *CCAM*, Part 1, p.657.
[120] Weyman, 'Bridgnorth MPs', p.61.

had had his estates sequestered, and had to make payment of £500 to the Committee for the Advancement of Money in July 1644.[121] Lawley continued to sit for Much Wenlock in the Convention Parliament, and then as one of the MPs for the shire 1661-78. He was later one of the Controllers of Customs and Master of the Jewel House.[122] Job Charlton of Ludford had already been a county commissioner for several years, yet his father, a goldsmith, had royalist sympathies, and was punished financially for his loyalty, having to pay £750 to the Committee for the Advancement of Money in November 1643.[123] On the face of it Charlton junior was loyal to Parliament, but when Richard Cromwell resigned his position as Protector he helped Sir Andrew Newport to secure the restoration of Charles II. He was an alderman of Ludlow and was appointed as Chief Justice of Chester in 1662, the same year that he was knighted. He continued as MP for Ludlow until 1678. Samuel Baldwyn only sat for the one term; he was the son of Charles Baldwyn who had been MP for the town in 1640. Samuel was a lawyer by profession who had overseen the royalist garrison at Stokesay during the first war. He became a serjeant at law, and King's sergeant, before being knighted in 1673.[124]

The 1660 Convention Parliament contained no MPs who had shown extreme parliamentarian loyalties, except some would say Thomas Jones of Shrewsbury. Job Charlton, the MP for Ludlow, was now joined by Timothy Littleton, the son of Sir Edward Littleton of Henley near Ludlow, and brother of Edward junior the former Keeper of the Great Seal during the reign of Charles I. Littleton was returned for the town again in 1661, and held his seat until 1669 when he was replaced by Somerset Foxe.[125] Bishop's Castle returned William Oakeley for a second term, and he was joined by Edmund Waring from Owlbury. Oakeley, who was also appointed as sheriff of the county that year, retained his seat until 1679 when he was replaced by Richard Scriven, and Waring continued to sit until the following year.[126] Lawley had been joined in April 1660 by Thomas Whitmore of Ludstone, a lawyer by profession, who

[121] *CCAM*, Part 1, p.435.
[122] H T Weyman, 'Members of Parliament for Wenlock', *TSANHS*, 3rd Series, Volume II (1902), pp. 297-358, (p.331).
[123] *CCAM*, Part 1, pp.289-290.
[124] Weyman, 'Ludlow MPs', pp.30-31.
[125] *Ibid.*, pp.31-32.
[126] Weyman, H.T., 'Members of Parliament for Bishop's Castle,' 2nd series, Volume X (1898), pp.33-68, (pp.50-51)

was sixty-one when he was elected, having been made a burgess of Much Wenlock in 1658. He was also appointed to the Commission of the Peace in 1656, and held the position of recorder of Bridgnorth from 1655 until 1676.[127] He was no relation to the Whitmores of Apley, but had definite royalist sympathies, having had to pay £60 to the Committee for the Advancement of Money.[128] He held his seat for less than two years, as in 1661 the members returned for Wenlock were Thomas Littleton and George Weld, the son of John Weld junior.[129]

Bridgnorth had two completely new members. Sir Walter Acton of Aldenham was the son of Sir Edward Acton, former MP for the town and royalist sympathiser. The second member was a Cambridgeshire man, John Bennett from Abingdon, who was married to Elizabeth Whitmore, the daughter of Sir Thomas Whitmore of Apley. He was returned for a second time in 1661 and held his seat until his death two years later, but Acton only had one term, and was replaced by Sir William Whitmore of Apley in 1661.[130] In Shrewsbury, Samuel Jones was joined by his cousin Thomas Jones, the younger brother of William, who was a lawyer by profession and who had been an alderman in the town since 1638. Thomas had accommodated Prince Rupert when he had stayed in the town, and was imprisoned within the castle when the town was taken in 1645, yet despite this his estates were not sequestered. He was appointed town clerk in 1662, but that appointment was taken off him by the commissioners appointed to oversee the good governance of Shrewsbury – Francis Newport, Francis Lawley, Richard Fowler, James Lacon, Robert Sandford and Francis Henry – and the position was given to Adam Ottley, son of Sir Francis instead. The commissioners were concerned on several fronts: Jones was a Presbyterian, his estates had not been touched by the Sequestration Committee, he had done all that he could to appoint Thomas Hunt as controller of the local post office in order to spy on royalist intelligences, and had sent word to Edmund Wareinge 'the most dangerous person in the county of Salop' that he was about to be taken by royalist sympathisers, allowing him to flee.[131] Finally there were two members returned for

[127] TNA:C231/6, p.343. *HoP*,1660-1690, p.713.
[128] *CCAM*, Part 2, p.709.
[129] Weyman, 'Wenlock MPs,' pp.331-333.
[130] Weyman, 'Bridgnorth MPs,' p.62.
[131] 'The Ottley Papers,' *TSANHS*, 4th Series, Volume I (1912), pp.296-300. *HoS*, Volume 1, p.420. Weyman, 'Shrewsbury MPs', pp.215-216.

the shire in 1660, Henry Vernon of Hodnet and Sir William Whitmore, who were replaced the following year by Sir Richard Ottley, son of Sir Francis, and Sir Francis Lawley.

There were new committees established throughout the Protectorate concerning both religion, finance and the militia, and on every one of these new personnel were introduced, while some disappeared, mainly through natural causes, such as Thomas Mytton who died in 1656 and Humphrey Mackworth senior who had died two years previously. There were those as well who were only appointed infrequently, such as Thomas Niccolls and Thomas Hunt, but there was still a solid core of officials that had sat on practically every committee since 1643, and continued to do so in the case of Samuel More and Andrew Lloyd despite their exclusion from central government.

Throughout the Protectorate large monthly assessments had to be found by all counties to pay the army and navy, and Militia Commissions were renewed to ensure the safety of the country. Thus in June 1657, an assessment of £60,000 for three months was ordered to fund the Spanish wars, and Shropshire had to pay £1,133 6s 8d per month towards that figure.[132] There were many new commissioners appointed to add to the old ones, so Thomas Hunt, John Groom, Samuel More, William Pierrepoint, Andrew Lloyd, Sir Humphrey Briggs, Robert Corbet, Thomas Mackworth, Arthur Chambers (Chambre), Michael Stephens, Thomas Harris, John Wybunbury, Leighton Harcourt, Thomas Kettleby, John Corbet, Creswell Tayleur, Edward Whicholt (Whichcott), Lancelot Lee, Thomas Baker, Richard and Edward Cressett, Francis Harris, Charles Langford, William Botterell, Philip Yonge, Charles Benyon, Roger Rowley, Roger Evans, Thomas Edwards John Downes, John Aston and Jeremy Powell were joined by Sir Robert Eyton, Humphrey Mackworth junior, who took up his father's place on all the commissions, Richard Sankey, Gabriel Wood, Thomas Richardson, Edward Powell, Timothy Littleton, Matthew Herbert, Richard Cheshire, Michael Ould, William Hill, Maurice Davies and John Jones both of Oswestry, John Huxley, Ralph Edwards, William Scot, Henry Powell of Worthern,

[132] *A & O*, Volume 2, pp.1058-1097.

Thomas Adams of Broseley, Richard Williams, Richard Smith, Adam Webb, a Shrewsbury alderman and draper, and the current mayor of Shrewsbury who was John Betton, and later John Walthall.

Most of these men had obscure origins, although John Huxley, William Scot and Thomas Adams were all described as gentlemen and Timothy Littleton as a serjeant at law. Sir Robert Eyton was not the former commissioner of Array from Pentre Maddock, as he had died in 1656, and this was his son and heir, also named Robert. Furthermore, Richard Sankey was probably not related to Sir Jerome Sankey (Zankey) of Balderton Hall at all, as that gentleman only had one elder brother called Robert who predeceased him, and his father, who was called Richard, had died long before.[133] Nothing is known about Thomas Richardson apart from the fact that he was party to more than one set of proceedings before the Wenlock bailiff's Court.[134] Matthew Herbert, later knighted, came from Bromfield;[135] Timothy Littleton was later elected as MP for Ludlow and was also the town's Recorder; Richard Cheshire and Adam Webb were Shrewsbury drapers who were appointed as town mayors – Cheshire in 1652 and Webb in 1655;[136] William Scot[t] came from Tong Norton, and by 1667 was living at Cosford Grange, and was described as a gentleman;[137] Michael Ould came from Broseley, and seemed to have a running legal battle with the Langley family, with numerous allegations being heard by Wenlock bailiff's court, including kidnapping, theft, trespass and debt; and John Huxley was one of the bailiffs of Much Wenlock.[138] So far as the other commissioners were concerned no substantive details can be clarified at all, although John Jones was appointed to the Commission of the Peace in 1655.[139] What is apparent from this list of commissioners is that, once again, few seem to have been from the north of the county and – a common trait in most royalist and parliamentarian committeemen throughout the period – the area around Wem, Whitchurch, Ellesmere and Market Drayton appears to have been very under-represented. The south was much more strongly represented than the north.

[133] *HV*, Part I, p.180. Gough, *History of Myddle*, p.142.
[134] SA: WB/F/2/2/40/1/10 is just one example.
[135] SA:20/14/47-48,65-66.
[136] SA:LB/7/403,1793. SA-IMG1673.
[137] SA:5735/2/1/12/15 and P/7/N/1/1.
[138] SA-IMG262. SA: WB/F/2/2/45/4/6, 50/6/2, 50/11/5 are just a few examples. SA: WB/F/2/2/13/2/9.
[139] TNA:C231/6, p.330.

Another such financial assessment was ordered later that month, this time to finance the army and navy, with English counties having to find £530,000 per month for three years. Shropshire had to contribute £661 2s 2d, and William Jones, Recorder of Shrewsbury, was added to the existing commissioners.[140] One final assessment was ordered in January 1660, when £100,000 per month for six months was ordered to be paid by all counties countrywide. Shropshire's portion was £1,322 4s 4d, and again there were a few new commissioners, as well as some old ones that returned. Some old commissioners returned, namely: Robert Wallop, Samuel Swanwick, Richard Henneage, Rowland Hunt junior, Edmund Wilde, Job Charlton, William Cotton, Samuel Kynaston, Charles Doughty, Thomas Gardner and Thomas Hayes. They were joined by new personnel: Richard Griffiths, Richard Smith, John Brown of Melverley, John Walcot, John Coles (probably Coates), William and Samuel Jones and William Oakeley. All of them rejoined Sir Humphrey Briggs, Andrew Lloyd, Samuel More, John Corbet, Creswell Tayleur, John Corbet, Thomas Kettleby, Philip Yonge, Lancelot Lee, Thomas Baker, Roger Evans, Francis Harris, Charles Langford, William Botterell, Edward Cressett, John Aston, Thomas Lockhart, and Thomas Mackworth.[141] As is usual some of the commissioners' backgrounds are difficult to ascertain, although John Brown was probably a misspelling of John Broom. John Walcot was the son and heir of Humphrey Walcot, had been a royalist soldier during the war, and was captured and held at Redcastle (Powis castle), and went on to become high sheriff of the county in 1661.[142] No details can be verified of Richard Smith, but Richard Griffiths was a gentleman from Sutton in Montgomeryshire, who was known to the Walcot family.[143]

There were also two Militia Commissions appointed for the county during that period. The first from July 1659 has already been discussed, but a second one was issued in March 1660, and new commissioners were appointed. The full list of commissioners was William Pierrepoint, Sir John Corbet, Sir Humphrey Briggs, Edward Harley (son of Sir Robert), Walter Long, Thomas Mackworth,

[140] *A & O*, Volume 2, p.1247.
[141] *A & O*, Volume II, pp.1355-1405.
[142] SA:X151/7.
[143] SA:1037/8/67.

William and Samuel Jones, John Corbet, William Liggon (Higgons/Higgins), Thomas Hunt, Robert Clive, Andrew Lloyd, Jervase Buck, Thomas Niccolls, Samuel More, John Walcot, William Cotton, Matthew Herbert, Thomas Kettleby, Lancelot Lee, Edward Whicholt, Creswell Tayleur, Humphrey Mackworth, Richard Bagot, Francis Forrester, Rowland Hunt, Thomas Lochard (Lockhart), Priamus Davies, Roger Evans, Francis Harris, Samuel Swanwick, Edward Cressett, Charles Langford, Michael Stephens, John Aston, Job Charlton, Eleazer Carswel, Sir Francis Lawley, William Oakeley, Thomas More, Thomas Jobber and the mayor of Shrewsbury, John Walthall.[144]

Most were familiar names, and the two stalwarts of the county committee, William Pierrepoint and Sir John Corbet, returned after a gap of over eight years; presumably both having been affected by Pride's Purge, they withdrew not only from central but also local affairs. Although Pierrepoint was elected as MP for Nottinghamshire in 1654, he never took his seat, nor did he respond to Oliver Cromwell's offer of a place in the Other House in 1657. Another long-time absentee was Walter Long, former parliamentarian captain, who had not sat on any Commission since 1647. As to the new crop of commissioners, as is always the way, some backgrounds, such as those of William Liggon and Jervase Buck, cannot be verified. Priamus Davies was a gentleman from Cookshall in Herefordshire who was known to both the Walcots and Richard Griffiths.[145] Offley Wakeman suggests that he was the son of David ap John of Pegloys, and Lucy Lloyd, daughter of Richard Lloyd esq. of Marrington.[146] Thomas Jobber came from Wrockwardine and was married to Sara, the daughter of Sir William Childe of Kinlet, and presumably therefore he was not from a modest background.[147] All that is known of Eleazer Carswell is that he was a gentleman from Shifnal, so again must have had sufficient standing within the county to merit a place on the Commission.[148] Again, however, the personnel that were involved in the administration of the county throughout this period where again from the specific areas mentioned in the previous chapters. The lack of representation from the north apart from John Wybunbury who was

[144] *A & O*, Volume II, pp.1320-1342.
[145] SA:1037/8/67.
[146] Offley Wakeman, *Quarter Sessions*, p. xi.
[147] SA-IMG1411
[148] SA:49/375.

probably a south Cheshire with land in Adderley and William Cotton again possibly from the Cheshire/ Shropshire border is a mystery which at this moment cannot be explained.

The most radical change in local government during the Protectorate was the introduction of the major generals into county affairs. They were introduced in response to the uprisings of spring 1655 and the subsequent failure of the Western Design in the Caribbean.[149] Described as 'the greatest creation of honours his highnes hath made since his accesse to the government,' they played an important, albeit brief, part in county life, with the aim of properly supervising the local militias, reforming morals, upholding the law, and ensuring that religious practices were adhered to.[150] Shropshire was governed by Major General James Berry, as part of the largest area under the new system. Little is known about Berry's early years; he left little by way of personal papers, and a, not unbiased, biography compiled by one of his descendants is vague on most details. No-one is even sure of Berry's date or place of birth; it is thought to be Lincolnshire or East Anglia, due to him joining Cromwell's Ironsides and the fact that he later bought up property in the area. Yet in his youth he was a clerk in an iron foundry in Stourbridge, and became friends with Richard Baxter, although they later fell out because of religious differences.[151] After joining the army, he rapidly rose through the ranks, becoming a major in 1647.[152] His talent seemed not only to be in military matters, but he was also very financially aware, using his army debentures to buy sequestered lands and property around Spalding, along with the former Bishop's Palace in Lincoln and property in Worcestershire, although he later complained that he had no property or money to buy or build a house in his jurisdiction.[153] He also appeared to have been tolerant towards other non-conformist religions, particularly Quakerism, and met the radical Fifth Monarchist preacher Vavasour Powell during his rule.[154]

[149] Durston, *Major Generals,* pp.16-21.
[150] *TSP*, Volume IV, p.88.
[151] Sir James Berry, and Stephen Grosvenor Lee, eds., *A Cromwellian major general: the career of Colonel James Berry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), pp.3-4.
[152] *Ibid.*, p.2.
[153] *Ibid.*, pp.95-107.
[154] Durston, *Major Generals,* p.43.

On 9 August 1655, Berry was granted control over the militia of Wales, Shropshire and Herefordshire.[155] At that time, Worcestershire was under the control of Charles Worsley, who also took care of the troops in Cheshire and Derbyshire, but it was transferred to Berry on 11 October 1655, and at the same time South Wales was temporarily taken out of his jurisdiction.[156] Initial instructions were sent to the major generals on 22 August 1655, in order to 'preserve the nation from the designs of restless and unwearied enemies,' including the prevention of any uprisings, securing the arms of all papists, and those who had adhered to the King, making sure that the highways were secure from robbers, keeping a watchful eye on the disaffected and banning all cock fights, bear baiting, horse races or unlawful assemblies to prevent further rebellions. They also had to ensure that idlers either worked or were moved on, promote godliness, assist in the collection of taxes from sequestered estates, and finally make sure that the exclusion of scandalous ministers and masters within the county was a priority.[157] The major generals' commissions were granted on 21 September 1655, and Berry was formally appointed on 11 October that year, when the boundaries of his administrative area were defined.[158] Their work promoting law and order, moral rectitude and godly behaviour was funded through the Decimation tax which was imposed solely on royalists, or those who had presented themselves as being a threat to Cromwell and the Protectorate in the rebellions of the early 1650s, rather than on the general public.

The minutiae of the tax, described as an extraordinary tax, were formulated in September 1655, and applied to those whose estates had already been sequestered or had borne arms for Charles I or his son during the wars or had assisted or abetted any actions against Parliament, unless they had since proven themselves to be loyal to the Protectorate. Anyone who came under those provisions, and who held real estate worth over £100 per year had to pay £10 for every £100 of income gained from the land. If there was no land but personal possessions worth over £1,500 then £100 was due for every £1,500.[159] The

[155] *CSPD*, Interregnum, 1655, p.275.
[156] *Ibid*., p.378.
[157] *Ibid.*, p.296.
[158] *Ibid.*, p.344.
[159] Durston, *Major Generals,* pp.97-98.

tax was collected at a local level, with royalist estates being assessed by county commissioners, but there are few surviving lists complied by county officials, and none have survived for Shropshire, or in fact for any of the counties under Berry's remit. To prevent any further unrest by those disaffected to Parliament, there was to be a real clampdown on those suspected of having royalist sympathies. Those under suspicion were not allowed to keep arms, those without visible means of support were to be transported, and any clergy or master suspected of harbouring loyalty to the crown were to be banned from preaching or teaching.[160]

Berry was a man who had become increasingly radical in his religious beliefs throughout the years. In the light of the growing divisions between them, Baxter described Berry as a 'man of great sincerity before the Wars,' but believed that success in the army and promotion to being one of Cromwell's favourites changed both his personality and religion. He began to eschew the old form of Puritan worship as he considered the ministers 'dull and self-conceited' and began to follow a 'new Light' provided by the sectaries.[161] He was certainly a favourite of Oliver Cromwell, and was elected as MP for Montgomeryshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire in 1656.[162] He also took up the place offered to him by Cromwell in the Other House, unlike William Pierrepoint, another nominee.[163] Berry made at least six tours of his appointed area, travelling as far as Monmouth in the south, Flint in the north, Carmarthen in the west and Worcester in the east, punctuated by trips to London.[164] His travels meant that he really had no permanent base, although he was quite happy to live in Ludlow castle if it could be made habitable, as, according to him, he had no money to rent or build himself.[165]

The townspeople in Shrewsbury seemed to have welcomed him, and he and his wife received gifts and entertainment from the corporation upon their visit in January 1656.[166] The entertainment bill, which

[160] *Ibid.*, p.25.
[161] Matthew Sylvester, *Reliquiae Baxterianae or Mr Richard Baxter's Narrative of the most Memorable Passages of his life and times* (London, 1696), p.57.
[162] Browne, *Notitia Parliamentaria*, pp.274,276.279.
[163] Durston, *Major Generals*, p.234.
[164] Berry, *James Berry*, pp.118-119.
[165] *TSP*, Volume IV, p.498.
[166] SA:3365/603/8,12,13,23.

included the purchase of four legs of mutton, four ribs of roast beef, four geese, three turkeys, plus rabbit, pigeon, and sturgeon, wine, muscat and whisky, came to £14.[167] His wife also received gifts including marchpane cakes, macaroons, a variety of soft fruit, sugar, sucketts, orange and lemon peel and almonds which cost £2 18s 2d.[168] When Berry returned to the town, the corporation laid out for sugar, biscuits, sack and wine to the cost of 14s 10d.[169] One of the first things that he did when arriving in the town was to release the imprisoned Owens, who had been arrested during the abortive rebellion in the spring of 1655, and he seemed to encounter no real opposition from the local officials, although, as will be seen, he was less than complimentary about them.[170] Yet he seemingly made little personal impact on county life. His correspondence to Thurloe from Shrewsbury was sporadic. In the first tour of his region, he went first to Worcester followed by Hereford, before he arrived at Shrewsbury, via Ludlow, on 1 December 1655.[171] He could not have spent long in the town, as he was in Wrexham less than a week later, but did return to the county the following month to attend the Quarter Sessions.[172] He seemed to spend the majority of his time during his tenure as major general either in Wales, or in the capital, for, as he had been elected as Knight of three shires, although he waived the election writs for Monmouthshire and later Herefordshire, he sat on over thirty parliamentary committees – generally on business not related to his regional military role – between his election as an MP in 1656 and the end of the rule of the major generals in January 1657.[173]

He appeared to have been a man with an intense sense of duty, and made several complaints to Thurloe about the lack of quality and inefficiencies of some of his local administrators, from which we get a picture of a man who was very hard to please, mainly because he had a very rigid view of what he believed to be the correct moral and religious path; certainly Baxter did not recognise him as the 'bosom friend' he once had been.[174] Yet he seemed to have a fairly good relationship with the commissioners

[167] SA:3365/603/13.
[168] SA:3365/603/23.
[169] SA:3365/603/12.
[170] *HoS*, Volume 1, pp.474-478.
[171] *TSP*, Volume IV, pp.211,237,272.
[172] *Ibid*., p.287.
[173] *CJ*, Volume 7, pp.38,55. For details of the committees that Berry sat on see *CJ*, Volume7.
[174] Sylvester, *Baxterianae*, p.57

in North Wales, whom he found were hard working, but he was concerned that many of the delinquents in Wales were too poor to be caught up by the decimation tax.[175] In fact, out of all the regions that he administered, it was Flintshire and Denbighshire that came in for the most praise; the militia was well equipped and very willing and able, and although Wales had been seen by many as being uncontrollable, it had complied with all orders and he had found 'not above one refactory person.'[176] Those commissioners even travelled with him to Montgomeryshire to carry on the work, but it was a completely different situation around Carnarvon and Anglesey where 'honest men are hard to find.'[177] Other counties did not merit his praise, although it was often only specific gentlemen that he found lacking, such as two of the candidates for the high sheriff of Worcestershire, Messrs Haslewood and Turvey. Berry described the former as being 'good for nothing, not like to doe you any service,' and the latter was 'good for little; a rich clowne.'[178]

It was Shropshire, however, that seemed to come in for the most criticism. Berry wrote to Thurloe on 5 January 1656 giving his views of the state of the governance of the county. It was not particularly positive, as he painted a picture of general disorganisation, finding Ludlow to be an 'unruly towne.' On military matters he had to muster and pay the troops himself, but was staying on in the area until after the end of the Epiphany sessions.[179] He also complained that some of those appointed onto the latest Commission of the Peace were undesirable, chiding Thurloe for his choice in the appointments, as he believed 'we have such a pitifull company of officers in state affaires that it is shame to see it, excisemen, treasurers, clerke of the peace, pronotaries, stewards, baliefes and captaines, and broad --- ministers.' Whether this was a general complaint against the administration throughout the country, or was specific to the county is unclear, but he was determined to sort out any malfeasance occasioned by officials and was particularly concerned about the quality of the ministers that had been appointed and those who had been excluded locally. The commissioners with whom he was displeased were not

[175] *TSP*, Volume IV, pp.287,316.
[176] *Ibid.*, p.334.
[177] *Ibid.*, pp.334-335.
[178] *Ibid.*, p.215.
[179] *Ibid.*, p.237.

specifically named, but presumably they were those appointed on to the 1655 commission, as Berry wrote to Thurloe at the beginning of January 1656. The new members appointed in 1654/1655 were Robert Clive, Edmund Wareinge, William Cotton, John Coates, Richard Whitehall, Thomas Lochard, Richard Bagot, John Jones, Thomas Hunt and Priamus Davies, with Samuel More and Sir Humphrey Briggs being re-sworn that year; as already discussed, all apart from Whitehall were appointed to later Commissions.[180] Yet all was not lost, as Berry seemed to have been quite positive about attendance at the Quarter Sessions, which he described as having the biggest attendance of justices for some time. Those that sat with him were William Jones, Robert Corbet, Harcourt Leighton, Humphrey Mackworth, Richard Bagot, Edmund Wareinge, Charles Langford, Thomas Kettleby, Philip Yonge, Edward Cressett, William Crowne, Creswell Tayleur, William Cotton and there were two new additions to the pool of justices namely Roger Evans who had sat on numerous commissions and Robert Oliver, whose identity is unknown.[181] He provided Thurloe with a list of those that attended to ascertain 'what hearth [heart?] they have for reformation,' and indicated that some disaffected justices were resolved to help him in his task to resolve moral and religious problems.[182] He was also having some difficulties with the appointment of a suitable sheriff; his main candidate was Thomas Hunt whom he saw as an 'honest man' but who obviously did not want the position, and took a lot of persuading until he finally accepted at the beginning of January 1656.[183]

As to any problems with royalists in the county, precautions had already been taken and several possible disaffected people had been detained, along with some Catholics, and those who were seen to be leading a lewd lifestyle. There appeared to have been no such difficulties in Worcestershire, and the Herefordshire cavaliers seemed, in the main, to have made their peace with Berry via various undertakings. That included Colonel Birch, who, after making application to the major general, was allowed his liberty by the governor of Hereford to return home.[184] So it was only in Shropshire that real

[180] TNA:C231/6. pp.315,318,330.
[181] Offley Wakeman, *Quarter Sessions*,p.23.
[182] *Ibid.*, p.413.
[183] *Ibid.*, pp.272,359,394.
[184] *Ibid.*, p.237.

danger from those disaffected towards Parliament was perceived, and they were dealt with in a more draconian manner. The wording of Berry's correspondence with Thurloe seemed to suggest that it was his actions and influence that had led to the detentions, when in fact most had been incarcerated or monitored from the spring of 1655 onwards, when it was purely through local intelligence and exploits that the uprising led by Harris had failed. Similarly, so far as the major generals' remit to promote a godly and moral lifestyle was concerned, the justices in Shropshire, certainly throughout the 1640s and 1650s, had always been aware of the need to punish those who maintained illegal alehouses. Yet, as Berry had indicated to Thurloe, they increased their efforts to clamp down on the alehouses which were 'Cages of all uncleanness and wickedness,' and the justices issued a warning notice to that effect on 5 January 1656, just before the next sitting of the Quarter Sessions, and presumably after meeting with the major general.[185] It is, however, noticeable that the number of presentments for illegal ale and beer sellers was no more than at the previous Quarter Sessions. Similarly, the local commissioners seemed to have made their best efforts to carry out their duties so far as the conduct of religious affairs was concerned, but, as was probably the case throughout the whole country, there were pockets of parishes who were quite happy to stick with the old ways, as has been seen by the approach Francis Tallents of Shrewsbury took to civil marriage.

All major generals had the help of local assistants, known as commissioners for securing the peace of the Commonwealth. Unfortunately, there is little information available about those in Shropshire, and there is only one mention of five of the commissioners in Thurloe's surviving papers: Charles Langford, Thomas Niccolls, Philip Yonge, William Crowne and Humphrey Mackworth junior.[186] John Sutton conducted a study of the commissioners in neighbouring Staffordshire, to establish whether they were Hutton's usurpers of a lower social class, or simply an unlikely mixture of men brought together for a joint cause rather than through family or friendship ties, as argued by Roots.[187] He had the luxury of

[185] *The Publick Intelligencer*, number 16, 14-21 January 1656.
[186] *TSP*, Volume V, p.751. BodL: Rawlinson MS. A.35, fol.17.
[187] John Sutton, 'Cromwell's Commissioners for Preserving the Peace of the Commonwealth: a Staffordshire case study' in Ian Gentles, John Morrill and Blair Worden, eds, *Soldiers, Writers and Statesmen in the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.151-182. Ronald Hutton, *The British Republic 1649-1660* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Publishing, 1990), p.85.

twenty-two gentlemen to study. Sutton found a very mixed bunch, ranging between ancient armigerous families, landed families, others with roots in trade, the law and medicine, some very wealthy, others who died in penury, but all religious conservatives. They came from different parts of the county, so they fitted Roots's view of their background rather than Hutton's. So far as Shropshire was concerned, the commissioners were not new names. We know that Niccolls was a Presbyterian who had roots in trade, as did Mackworth junior, although he was further removed from the wool trade, but had close connections with the law through his late father. Both had very much confined themselves to local issues, although Mackworth had experienced one foray into central politics, and both came from long-established families with a modicum of wealth behind them, originally gained through trade. William Crowne was linked to the Mackworth family through marriage, as he had married Humphrey Mackworth's widowed sister Agnes. Little is known about his early life, but he seems to have had links to the Earl of Arundel prior to the war. He was firmly for Parliament, and there is no doubt that his loyalty never wavered, but he gives an impression of someone always chasing money, and had the ability to change his loyalties accordingly. In 1656, he went into partnership and purchased land in Nova Scotia, and moved there in 1657, before later transferring to Boston. One of his partners in the venture, which failed, was Sir Lewis Kirke, former royalist governor of Bridgnorth. Crowne later reconciled himself to the crown upon the accession of Charles II.[188] Charles Langford was probably a wealthy yeoman; he was involved in land deals in the south of the county, and was a burgess of Bishop's Castle. He certainly had no wealthy or influential patrons or contacts. Finally, Philip Yonge was from a long-established family from Caynton; the family had been in the county since the fourteenth century, yet had often married outside the county, making alliances mainly with Cheshire and Staffordshire families. The family would be classified as minor gentry and Yonge himself was married to the daughter of the Puritan Robert Corbet of Stanwardine.[189] All these men would fit in with Roots's view of their position in society, as there was a variety of backgrounds, but most had common ties that joined them together in a common cause.

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Ivan Roots, 'Swordsmen and Decimators. Cromwell's Major Generals,' in R.H. Parry, ed., *The English Civil War and After 1642-1658* (London: Macmillan, 1970), pp.83-84.

[188] *ODNB*, entry by Beth Neman.

[189] *HV*, Part II, pp.517-520.

Berry may have made little impact within the county, despite his intentions, but that is not to say that the administration of Shropshire was as chaotic as he had portrayed. Probably, the officials simply did not live up to his high standards. Those local men who were already installed as commissioners of both the various local committees and the Commission of the Peace, seemed to manage the affairs of the county in a relatively satisfactory, if not always orderly, fashion. They seemed to cope with most things that were thrown at them, despite a lack of resources and any help from other counties in their hour of need, as was seen in the spring of 1655 and the summer of 1659. Their track record, so far as the implementation of a more moral lifestyle was concerned, was certainly successful in the prosecution of illegal ale sellers and maltsters, particularly in Shrewsbury, well before and after Berry's tenure. In religious matters, however, they were less successful in ensuring that the latest practices were adhered to, but this was mainly because there were many people who wanted to have all the formalities of a religious service for marriages and baptisms, and some ministers were more than happy to oblige.

## Finance, Religion and Justice

Life in the county continued to be as financially tough as it was during the war and post-war years, although there was no longer such an expense for repairing the county's damaged infrastructure. There was still much work to be done, however, as substantial damage had been caused to many churches, and some such as the parish church of Bishop's Castle had to be totally rebuilt. Even though part of the sequestration procedure for many of the wealthier delinquents involved the payment of tithes to support the reconstruction, extra lewns were demanded of the parishioners. Bridgnorth was still in a dire state

even in 1662 when Charles II allowed the raising of money for town repairs.[190] Further monies were collected through the sequestration of the estates of those involved in the 1659 uprising, although in the main it was sent to the central Exchequer. The biggest loser at that time was the Myddelton family, although the local commissioners had substantial difficulties getting their hands on his assets.[191] Francis Charlton, who was also suspected of being involved, had his horses seized as a prize of war, and although he was not fined, his estates were secured at the beginning of October 1659.[192] The extra monthly assessments imposed upon the county at this time were undoubtedly an added burden, but there seem to have been no petitions from the townspeople, certainly in Shrewsbury, pleading poverty. There can be no proper appraisal of the situation, however, because evidence of the collection of the assessments has long disappeared, so it can never really be established whether they were paid in a timely manner if at all. This evidence would have perhaps provided another insight into the county's view of the Protectorate, seeing whether the inhabitants accepted the extra financial burdens and had sufficiently revived their fortunes so as not to be unduly bothered, or whether, in fact they resisted through a systematic non-payment, but alas the evidence is absent.

In matters of religion and education, the system of choosing suitable ministers and masters altered yet again. Gone were the Presbyterian-style classes, and in their stead a system of triers and ejectors was imposed by Cromwell on the country in March 1653. The triers, or as they were formally called the commissioners for the approbation of public preachers, were a group of thirty-eight specially selected men, sitting in London. In August of the following year the new system was fully established with the introduction of the ejectors in every county, who were all local county men with the power to summon both members of the clergy and schoolmasters, and enquire as to their fitness to carry out their duties. Those who were deemed to be ignorant, negligent or scandalous were to be deprived of their living. Auden argued that because the system was now effectively run by Independents and Anabaptists, then the Church was confined to ministers from one denomination only. This does not really make sense,

[190] SA:BB/C/4/5/4
[191] *CCC*, Part V, pp.3246-3247.
[192] *Ibid.*, p.3250.

however, as particularly Independents were more tolerant of other faiths, provided they adhered to their view of godliness, than the Presbyterians ever had.[193] The Shropshire ejectors all were familiar names, although some were new to committee life in 1654: Humphrey Mackworth, senior, John Corbet, Creswell Tayleur, Robert Corbet, Thomas Mackworth, Thomas Barker (Baker), Roger Evans, Lancelot Lee, Thomas Kettleby, Samuel More, Thomas and Rowland Hunt, Charles Langford, John Downes, Captain Richard Smith, John Aston, William Botterell, Richard Cheshire, Richard Heneage and Richard Piggott. Aston and Botterell were also on the Herefordshire Commission.

Cheshire and Smith were newcomers who would later be appointed to the financial and militia committees, whilst Piggott was the schoolmaster who replaced Thomas Chaloner, and this was the only committee that he sat on. Their duties were to consider both lifestyle and practices employed in worship or education. Issues such as adultery, fornication, intoxication, profanity and gaming were considered as well as reading from the Book of Common Prayer, or celebrating Whitsun wakes, maypoles or morris dancing, or anything that would encourage what were almost heathen pastimes. They were aided in their tasks by twenty Ministers Assistants, which included Francis Tallents and Samuel Hildersham, as well as Rowland Nevet of Oswestry, who had been approved to preach in one of the counties of northern Wales in 1650.[194] Unfortunately, there are no surviving records of their investigations, but there is no suggestion that they were not diligent in their duties, and certainly there is evidence that a few parishes were affected.[195]

So far as schoolmasters were concerned, Thomas Chaloner had been ejected from his living from the fall of Shrewsbury, and went on to spend years in the wilderness. He was not the only schoolmaster ejected. Edward Payne from Oswestry was sequestered for delinquency and ejected, and both Gervase Needham, William Higgins of Stoke on Tern and Ambrose Phillips of Westbury were denied the right

[193] J.E. Auden, 'The Ecclesiastical History of Shropshire during the Civil War, Commonwealth and Restoration', *TSANHS*, 3rd Series, Volume VII (1907), pp.211-310, (p.243).
[194] *A & O*, Volume II, pp.968-977,345.
[195] Auden, 'Ecclesiastical History', pp.285-256.

to earn a living through education.[196] After several months of a semi-nomadic lifestyle Chaloner set up a school at Birchall near Ellesmere, where he welcomed the sons of many of the royalist gentry, including those of Thomas Wolryche and Viscount Kilmorrey. In February 1647, Sir John Corbet appointed him as headmaster of the school at Market Drayton, but he only lasted a few months before being ejected by the local Committee of Safety. From there he moved to Harwarden in Flintshire, where he was again ejected, and then on to Overton in the same county, followed by Stone in Staffordshire. Eventually in 1654 he ended up as headmaster of the newly-established school at Newport which had been established by the wealthy London based draper Thomas Adams.[197]

At the restoration, the positions were reversed yet again, bishops and many of those ministers and masters who had been ejected from their livings returned, their successors having been ejected for failing to conform to the new style (for most younger people) religious practices. The process did not start immediately, however, for a series of measures were passed to ensure that any hint of Independency in both the Church and public life were eradicated, and to ensure that the precepts of the Church of England be adhered to. The Corporation Act of 1661 ordered that no-one be allowed to take up, or stay on in, public office unless they had taken Holy Communion within the last year, had sworn both the oaths of allegiance and supremacy and had renounced the Covenant.[198] In 1662, the Act of Uniformity reintroduced both the episcopal ordination of all ministers and the Book of Common Prayer, but many ministers refused to take the oath that was required of them, and so were forced to leave their livings.[199] The situation was made worse for the non-conformists by the Conventicle Act of 1664, which precluded meetings of five or more dissenters, and the Five Mile Act of 1665, which barred all ejected ministers from going within five miles of an incorporated town, or their former livings, as well as precluding them from teaching.[200]

[196] *Ibid.*, pp.254-255,262,286.
[197] G.W. Fisher, *The Annals of Shrewsbury School* (London: Methuen & Co., 1899), pp.161-172.
[198] John Raitby, ed. *Statutes of the Realm,* Volume V, 1628-1680 (1819). 13, Car II, Stat.2, c.1, pp.321-3.
[199] *Ibid.*, 14, Car II c.4, pp.364-370.
[200] *Ibid.*, 16, Car II, c.3, 4, pp. 516-520.17, Car II, c 2, p.575

Calamy noted that three out of the four Shrewsbury parishes – St Chad's, St Mary's and St Alkmund's – lost their ministers, which included the open-minded Francis Tallents, who, along with John Bryan minister of St. Chad's, seems to have spent some time in prison prior to 1666. Other examples of local ejections were Andrew Parsons of Wem who had held the living there since the town had fallen to Parliament in 1643. He, however, lost his living in 1660, after one of his parishioners informed the authorities that he had compared the King to the devil. He was apparently tried at the Shrewsbury Assizes in 1661 before Sir Francis Newport, and Serjeant Turner, was found guilty, even though he should have been acquitted on a technicality, was fined £200, and was kept in prison until the fine was paid.[201] It was not just the obvious non-conformers such as Rowland Nevet that were dismissed, as even some of the clergy who had been mistreated by Parliament in the past, such as Joshua Richardson of Myddle, Zachariah Thomas of Tilstock who had been appointed after 1660, and John Adams of Stoke on Tern, who had been friendly with many of the gentry who were 'high flown and debauch'd' before the wars, found that they could not conform and so were ejected. Some were replaced by their predecessors, examples being Humphrey Wynn of Oswestry who was returned to the living that Rowland Nevet had made his own, and Edward Payne who could teach at Oswestry school, whilst John Adams's living was returned to William Higgins.[202]

So far as the Commission of the Peace was concerned, new members were introduced during the Protectorate, some of whose origins meant that they would not have been appointed during the period of the monarchy. Justice continued to be administered on the same terms as before, and as already indicated, the rule of the major general in no way affected the way in which offenders were apprehended and presented before the court. They had been employed to encourage a godlier lifestyle, which included less drinking, but the available evidence in Shropshire suggests that there was no ascertainable difference in the years 1655-7, than at other times. Durston made no exact study of the position, which would have been really an impossibility given that he was covering the whole country, but Coleby's

[201] Edmund Calamy, *An Account of the Ministers Lecturers Masters and Fellows of Colleges and Schools who were Ejected or Silenced after 1660 by, or before, the Act of Uniformity* Volume II (London, 1713), pp.546-647,555-556,561,563-564,566.
[202] Auden, 'Ecclesiastical History', pp.293-295.

study on Hampshire certainly confirmed that the JPs did not need the encouragement of central government to enforce the law.[203] Similarly, a study on King's Norton in Worcestershire, conducted by C.D. Gilbert, suggested that the pronouncement of the Worcester Grand Jury in 1655 that half of the illegal alehouses in the town had been suppressed, could only have been due to the work of the local magistrate and minister. Yet there is no indication how that was achieved, nor was any mention made of the role of the local constables, whose work and subsequent presentments were vital to the machinery of justice.[204]

The new commissioners of the Peace appointed throughout the period were generally gentlemen or townsmen already involved in local affairs or business, and many sat on other local committees during the period, but as has been found throughout this thesis, some of their origins are so obscure that they can only be guessed at. Humphrey Mackworth junior was appointed in 1654, and an influx of new appointees the following year, namely Robert Clive, Edmund Wareinge, William Cotton, John Coates, Richard Whitehall, Thomas Lochard, Richard Bagot, John Jones, Thomas Hunt and Priamus Davies, with Samuel More, Thomas Hunt and Sir Humphrey Briggs being re-sworn in at the same time. As already discussed, there is no available background information about Lochard; the same can be said of Richard Whitehall, although there is a suggestion that he came from the manor of Dodington which was a suburb of Whitchurch.[205] John Co[a]tes came from Woodcote in the parish of Sheriffhales, and Richard Bagot was a Shrewsbury draper who was appointed mayor of the town in 1661, who was displaced the same year under the Act for Regulating Corporations.[206]

In 1656 the commissioners were joined by Matthew Herbert, Thomas Whitmore, Job Charlton and Thomas Powis, and in 1658 John Manley was appointed to the Commission. Finally, on 17 March 1659, William Pierrepoint was made the *Custos Rotulorum* (titular head) of the Shropshire commission.[207]

[203] Andrew Coleby, *Hampshire*, pp.54-55.
[204] C.D. Gilbert, 'Magistracy and Ministry in Cromwellian England: the case of King's Norton, Worcestershire.' *Midland History*,23, (1998), pp.71-83, (pp.75-76).
[205] SA: P303/F/1/1/2, p.283.
[206] SA:X7381/28/165 (Coates). SA: XMI7334/1-3 (Bagot).
[207] TNA:C231/6, p.305, p.315, p.318, p.330, p.343, p.401, p.420.

The assizes that sat at Shrewsbury in May 1654 also revealed the names of some of the current justices of the peace, namely Lancelot Lee, Roger Evans, John Chetwood, Charles Langford, Edward Cressett, John Downes, John Jones, Richard Salloway, Francis Harris, Walter Storey, Andrew Lloyd, Thomas Hunt, Roger Rowley, Henry Mildmay, Samuel More, Philip Yonge, Robert Corbet, Edmund Whitehouse, William Jones, Thomas Kettleby, Creswell Tayleur, Harcourt Leighton, Thomas Baker, Robert Wallop, Thomas Mytton, John Corbet and Thomas Mackworth. Humphrey Mackworth was also present as a member of the Council. All had been appointed from 1647 onwards, apart from Harcourt Leighton who had first become a JP in May 1635 and Robert Corbet who first appeared as a commissioner in 1641.[208] Most were familiar names, and had sat on numerous commissions or had been involved in corporate affairs. New names were Walter Storey and Edmund Whitehouse, but no details can be found about their backgrounds.[209] Another justice whose identity is unclear was Roger Prince who sat at the Easter sitting of the Shrewsbury Assizes in 1657 alongside Robert Corbet, Harcourt Leighton and Robert Clive.[210] It would be pure supposition to assume that he was related to the Shrewsbury lawyer Sir Richard Prince.

During the Protectorate Shrewsbury Quarter Sessions again provide a most complete picture of local justice at work, even though there is no surviving evidence for some of the years. There are annual returns for the sessions in Ludlow, but as in the Commonwealth years, they reveal little. For Bridgnorth there is also some evidence of the Quarter Sessions taking place in 1654. In three separate presentments for that year, the constables provided details of seventy-one offences of the illegal sale of ale and beer, although several were repeat offenders. The initial list of forty-six men and women, including four described as gentlemen, were to be fined 20s for their offences. The other two lists refer to those named as being wilful and persistent offenders who had to appear before the court.[211] Ludlow seemed to have been far more relaxed about the offences of illegally selling ale and beer, for although the Constables presented around sixty such offenders in 1653, there were no further presentments until 1655, when

[208] TNA:C231/5, p.196,476.
[209] TNA: ASSI/5/213, Part 1. TNA:C231/6.
[210] Offley Wakeman, *Quarter Sessions*, p.3.
[211] SA:BB/F/2/2/2/1/1/1. BB/F/2/2/2/1/2/1. BB/F/2/2/2/2/1/1/2.

there was only one offence.[212] In July 1656, perhaps under Berry's influence, there were thirty-six instances of breaches of the Assize of Ale and Bread, but the following year that had dropped to two illegal ale sellers and twenty-seven breaches of the Assize.[213] In 1659, there were forty-four legally operating alehouses and twenty-two common tailing houses, but still there were nineteen incidents of illegal alcohol activity presented by the constable John Evans, and John Matthews the constable of Broad Street Ward reported eleven such offences in his jurisdiction, as well as thirteen in the Old Street and twenty-two in the Castle Street wards.[214] In some years the constables seemed to be more interested in those who were profaning the Lord's day, and there are no presentments for other offences during this period.

At Shrewsbury, the emphasis was again on those illegally selling ale and beer or preparing malt, although the offences of theft, affray and assault also did crop up. The Quarter Sessions sat in 1656, 1658 and 1659. Major General James Berry was present at both the January and July sittings in 1656, but there is no evidence that he took any active part in the proceedings.[215] The figures for 1656 show no marked difference in the number of presentments for the illegal selling of ale in the town. Out in the liberties there were only handful of such presentments, but that had been the case since the previous decade. The presentment from Frankwell merely lists the licenced alehouses and inns. The other presentments that are available are slightly confusing, because they are generally undated, but it can be assumed that they are all from that year. The constables of the Stone ward of the town presented a list of forty-five such offences, whilst Castle ward had forty such offenders in September 1656, and Abbey Foregate, again in the suburbs, had twenty-one.[216] The returns also indicated that the Welsh ward had no ale houses and Frankwell had twenty, and this could have been a response to an edict from Berry that all suitable alehouses be listed so that the others run by 'persons of dissolute life, and disaffected to the Government' could be targeted.[217] What is odd is that there were no presentments from the Welsh

[212] SA:LB/11/4/79/37. LB/11/4/81/2.
[213] SA:LB/11/4/82/18. SA:LB/4/84/1
[214] SA:LB/11/4/85/14a,15,19. SA:LB/4/86/12-14.
[215] Wakeman, 'Quarter Sessions', pp.23,26.
[216] SA:3365/2246/63,65-69.
[217] *Publick Intelligencer,* Number 6, 14-21 January 1655/6.

ward that year, which was extremely unusual given that area's history in this matter, but it could well be that those records were lost. In July 1657, Abbey Foregate presented twenty-five offenders, Stone ward forty, Frankwell twenty and the Welsh ward forty-nine, all for illegal ale selling.[218] This was proof that Berry's mission to eradicate such dens of iniquity failed, particularly as Frankwell had twenty licenced establishments anyway.

The presentments for May 1658 showed a marked increase in such offences, as the Stone ward presented fifty-six illegal ale sellers and eight illegal maltsters, Abbey Foregate had sixty-five ale sellers and fifteen maltsters, Castle Foregate had fourteen offenders, Castle ward forty-three, Frankwell eighteen and the Welsh ward fifty-seven.[219] Similar figures were seen the following year and through into the restoration. There seems to be no explanation for the high levels of illegal alcohol manufacturing and sale within Shrewsbury; it was the largest town, so it was perhaps natural that such numbers occurred, but Ludlow had a substantial population as well and there were no such difficulties there, unless the constables and the justices in Ludlow were simply not that bothered about such offences. Those in Shrewsbury were bothered, albeit they were obviously fighting a losing battle.

The years of the Protectorate and its aftermath in Shropshire proved to have been as tumultuous, if not more so, than the Commonwealth period. The more sophisticated rebellions, the introduction of the major generals, regular changes in MPs and the mass ejection of unsuitable clergy, heightened the sense of uncertainty. This was not a phenomenon specific to Shropshire, but the county seemed to have coped with all these factors in a rather controlled manner. The 1655 rebellion was quickly put down due to local intelligence, and not many locals got involved in Booth's uprising of 1659. Berry had little impact on how the county was administered, and the populace do not seem to have objected to changes within the clergy, probably because many were quietly worshipping in their own way, and ignoring all edicts. The impression that is given of the county during this period is that it was forced to be very much self-

[218] SA:3365/2247/73-74,83-84.
[219] SA:3365/2248/63,65,67-70.

sufficient – as appeals for help from the centre received a meagre response – and could solve its own problems without outside help.

The return of the monarchy meant that the local committees were disbanded, and the system of government resorted to its pre-war format. By that time many of those who had been involved with the local committees since the beginning of the war had died, Mackworth in 1654 and Mytton two years later; Niccolls and Hunt were still alive, but the impression is that they did not have as much appetite for local government as they had in the past (though they were both appointed to sit on the local Commissions and Niccolls was an assistant to Berry), either due to age, or the increasing introduction of new more radical members. The same can be said of William Pierrepoint and Sir John Corbet, perhaps more so, as both were clearly disillusioned after Pride's Purge, although Pierrepoint did resume his political career in the Convention Parliament, but as the member for Nottinghamshire. Many of those who had sat as commissioners and JPs were no longer seen to be of sufficient standing to be involved in restoration politics and were replaced by the county gentry, who took up what they saw as their true role within the county. Shropshire certainly had its share of officials of a more modest social background, some of whom probably had radical views. That is not to say all were replaced, for example Charles Benyon and John Walthall were still sitting as JPs in October 1660, and William Cotton and Samuel More are noted as being present at the Quarter Sessions in January 1662.[220] It is also apparent that unlike other counties such as Sussex, the county was run solely by those who supported Parliament, or at least kept their royalist affiliations quiet, up until 1658, when a few men with some such sympathies were appointed. Whether this was because it was already apparent that it was inevitable that the monarchy would be restored, or through lack of suitable alternatives, remains unclear. What is certain is that throughout all the upheavals, there was little personal animosity, and trade and land deals between those of both sides carried on as before.

[220] SA:3365/2250/58. Wakeman, 'Quarter Sessions', p.75.

# Conclusion

To bury all seeds of future discords and remembrance of the former as well[1]

The Restoration of the monarchy meant a return to the natural order of things for some, and the end of the revolutionary ideal for others. Yet despite the great desire for reconciliation by many, it took years for the country to return to normality: for those who had been loyal to the King, to receive pensions or for their estates and livings to be restored to them, and for some of the regicides who had fled the country to be punished for their part in the demise of Charles I. Most of those men who had fostered the Republic were never criminalised, as many were dead, and the Act of Indemnity and Oblivion exempted all but a few for their actions against the King; although they were, in the main, dismissed from their positions of power and suffered financially as a result. In Shropshire those who were punished under the provisions of the Act, were the regicides the late Humphrey Edwards, who had signed the King's death warrant, and Robert Wallop and Henry Mildmay, who had both sat on various county committees. Despite his demise, Edwards's estates were forfeited for his part in the trial and subsequent execution of Charles I. This despite the fact that they now belonged to his sister, the royalist Lucy Ottley.[2] Robert Wallop and Henry Mildmay were not executed but both were stripped of their titles and imprisoned for life after being dragged to Tyburn with a noose around their necks.[3]

[1] John Raitby, *Statutes of the Realm*, Volume V 1628-1680 (London, 1811), pp.26-234. An Act of Free and Generall Pardon Indemnity and Oblivion.
[2] TNA: PROB 6/34 fol.270.
[3] Mark Noble, *The Lives of the Regicides and other commissioners of the pretended High Court of Justice appointed to sit in judgement upon their sovereign King Charles I*, Volume II (London, 1798), pp.69-79,301-306.

In Shropshire, the accession of Charles II meant that those members of the gentry who had been loyal to the monarchy, and who had, in the main, been politically ostracised, were restored to their accepted role in county affairs through their return to the Commission of the Peace, and those men who had taken their place during the Commonwealth and Protectorate years were removed. The latter fell back into relative obscurity, although many such as Esay Thomas, Michael Stephens and John Aston continued to play a part in town affairs through their positions within the various corporations. Despite this massive upheaval there was little evidence of rancour or revenge amongst those who had been ousted from county affairs for nearly fifteen years, and the action taken over the appointment of Thomas Jones was more of an exception rather than a rule. This was because most people wanted a return to real peace after almost two decades of conflict and disharmony. This desire had increased considerably during the last years of the Protectorate, and although the young 'smoaking firebrands' such as Sir Thomas Harris had been desperate for the return of the monarchy, Booth's rebellion had proved that many of those involved, generally older and possibly wiser, had really wanted some sort of stability in their lives. The fear of the proliferation of Quakers and Anabaptists, and others whose religious practices did not conform to what was acceptable or deemed normal by many of the gentry, was uppermost in the decision to promote the return to a monarchical rule which would protect their socially conservative, yet stable, lifestyles. A prime example of this dislike of all things that did not conform to acceptable behaviour was seen in the case of the appointment of the man called Peartree to the living at Hodnet way back in the 1640s, whose only citation by Walker was not to do with his abilities as a clergyman, but to the fact that he had been a pedlar.[4]

The purpose of this thesis has been to provide a detailed account of the governance of Shropshire during the mid-seventeenth century, including the personnel involved in administering this rural and relatively isolated county. This work has expanded on the recent works that have been carried out on the county, not only by the length of the period it has covered, but also has increased the knowledge of the workings

[4] John Walker, *The Sufferings of the Clergy of the Church of England during the Great Rebellion* reprinted (London: Wertheim, Macintosh and Hunt, 1863), p.42.

of urban affairs within the county. It has shown that, despite its remote locale, Shropshire's trade in wool had brought extreme wealth and allowed many local families to increase their prospects both socially and economically, and established themselves as members of the minor gentry. Some of these families, such as the Corbets, had long-standing ties to the county, but had taken the opportunities afforded by the Dissolution of the Monasteries to increase their social standing. Many county families were linked either through trade or marriage. No one family held the balance of power, but some had more influence than others, particularly the Newports. As the local, and mainly absent, peers played no real part in county affairs, despite their vast landholdings, the administration of the county fell to both the greater gentry such as the Newports and the Corbets, and the middling and lesser gentry families such as the Myttons and the Ottleys.

In the towns, merchants and lawyers made up the bulk of the local administrative structure, and William Spurstowe, a London draper, was even elected as MP for Shrewsbury. Shropshire had six corporate towns, and, particularly in Shrewsbury, the guilds wielded a lot of power. Some wealthy merchants and lawyers such as the Ottleys, Mackworths and Myttons, used their substantial wealth to purchase country estates or increase their landholdings, and consequently increased their social standing. Others stayed within the town environs, but built palatial town houses, such as Ireland's mansion or Richard Prince's Whitehall on the Abbey Foregate in Shrewsbury. These families had power within their own immediate environs, either in the field of business or town affairs, but were not welcomed onto Charles I's Commission of the Peace, although some had been justices of the peace during his father's reign. So their influence was restricted to small, yet populous, and given the complexities of urban affairs, often more problematic, spheres.

As to the question of gentility, the definition employed by both Morrill and Hughes has been utilized during this thesis, as it must be accepted that Stuart society was extremely fluid, and knighthood could not be the sole marker of gentility, particularly in Shropshire, where there were relatively few armigerous families. Most county families believed that there was no stigma attached to continued involvement in business matters, whether that be through direct involvement with the family's original

trade, or the improvement of land and the use of natural resources on the estates acquired from the profits of business. In fact, sometimes those who had used deceit to improve their lineage, such as Sir Thomas Harris, were reviled. This often led to a blurring of the lines as to who was a gentleman. The county had many prominent merchants and lawyers, several of whom were wealthier than the old-established county families. They were looked upon by their peers as gentlemen, and signed themselves as such.

In religious affairs there was a rapid growth in Puritanism from the early 1600s onwards, particularly amongst the merchants in Shrewsbury. There were also several Catholic families in the county who were very much tolerated, although there were no Catholic members of the Commission of the Peace after the purge of justices by Charles I in the 1620s. In the main, however, the county followed the teachings of the Anglican church, and although many parishes wanted to keep up the old traditions of the church, many worshippers did not favour the Laudian reforms, and as a result Puritanism flourished. It was not just the question of religion that divided later allegiances, some of the cracks had begun to develop during the 1630s, over questions of religion, as well as some of the taxes and policies of Charles I during the Personal Rule. Yet the rancour and divisions of the 1620s and 1630s did not necessarily mean automatic allegiance to one side or the other during the conflict. Examples of this can be seen in the case of Francis Charlton who was imprisoned alongside Sir John Corbet for his opposition to the muster masters fee, yet later supported the King, as did John Weld who complained bitterly to the Privy Council over the level of ship money assessments. During the religious acrimony in Shrewsbury over the preacher Julius Herring, Sir John Owen of Condover supported the Arminianism of Peter Studley, and then, on the face of it, supported the crown during the war, but his sequestration papers suggest that he was a secret friend to Parliament, yet Humphrey Walcot who was described as a good Puritan, and who would have been expected to be more sympathetic to Parliament's cause, supported the monarchy.

It has been established that Shropshire was predominantly, although often not enthusiastically, royalist for most of the war. In Shrewsbury those men who supported Parliament were forced to withdraw from local affairs, some fled the county whilst others were incarcerated. As for the other corporate towns, the

evidence as to allegiance is sparse, but it is apparent that there was little or no change in the administrative personnel throughout both the war years but also in the Commonwealth and Protectorate years. Whether that was because allegiances were kept private or due to a lack of suitable replacements is unclear. What is apparent, however, was that some, such as John Baker, burgess of Bishop's Castle kept their position after the war despite obvious royalist credentials, Baker only retiring due to age and ill health. Furthermore, some town officials who had remained in post throughout the wars, such as Michael Stephens of Bishop Castle and John Aston of Ludlow, later sat on parliamentary county commissions. As to why Shrewsbury was different with its radical changes of personnel is unclear. It may well be that as it was the largest and most prosperous town in the county, it attracted a divergence of opinions and attitudes in its officials, which frequently came to the fore. On the other hand, it was probably because the proliferation of Puritanism amongst many of the town merchants, who were also corporate officials, meant that when Shrewsbury declared itself for the King their position became untenable and many had to retire from their duties, often in an involuntary manner. By the early summer of 1646 roles were reversed in many aspects of county life. Many of the local clergy and schoolmasters who had supported the crown were ejected from their livings. Those men who had been forced out of Shrewsbury town affairs were reinstated, and the majority of those who had supported the crown (Charles Benyon being one of the few exceptions) were ejected from office, and often fell prey to the sequestration and subsequent compounding fines imposed on their estates. At the county level, the royalist gentry were no longer part of the administrative system, for although there was no physical bar from them sitting as a justice or involvement in other local office, many were either in gaol or under house arrest, or were so tied up with their composition proceedings, fines and debts they had no time to be concerned with such matters. In any event, they would not have been welcomed, as Shropshire had a ready supply of men willing and able to serve.

In Shropshire there was little parliamentary reliance on the services of outsiders to help with administrative matters. During the war years the royalists had originally appointed local men as governors, and although several of the commissioners of Array had no connections with the county, they were not involved in the minutiae of county affairs. It was only later in the war that Sir Arthur

Capel replaced the local governors with professional soldiers, or more experienced military men. There had been a few non-local MPs recruited to the parliamentary county committee in the early days of the first civil war, but after that most committeemen had some affiliation to the shire. This was a totally different situation to that experienced in Somerset, where non-locals were relied upon to administer the county due to a lack of suitable alternatives. Nor did Shropshire appoint any former royalists to the commissions after the war, either in a spirit of reconciliation or necessity, as happened in Hampshire and Devon.[5] The only obvious exception was the appointment of Charles Benyon as mayor of Shrewsbury, a justice of the peace and a member of one of the financial assessment committees. Benyon had been mayor of the town during the royalist occupation, so must have been party to their affairs, and if not actively involved on their behalf during the war, he was at least complicit. There may have been suspicions about the true allegiance of Sir Gilbert Cornewall, but they probably arose after the conflict and Cornewall appeared on commissions throughout the period without any problems. There was no shortage of suitable men in Shropshire able to take over the administrative duties that had previously been fulfilled by the royalist gentry. There seems to have been a relatively inclusive policy for recruits and, so long as they were loyal to Parliament, their backgrounds mattered little. It was, however, evident that those appointed either already held places within the corporation, or were relatively wealthy yeomen. There was some nepotism in recruitment procedures, but those appointed seem to have come from divergent backgrounds, and some must have had more radical views, such as those displayed by Humphrey Edwards and Edmund Wareinge.

In Shropshire, the Commonwealth and Protectorate years provided opportunities for many men who would never have achieved such positions before the war. The origins of many of these can only be guessed at, although they must have been either respectable yeomen or otherwise had held more prominent position in town affairs. Their allegiance to a parliamentarian faction, whether it be Presbyterian or Independent, can never be properly assessed due to the lack of archival evidence. There must, necessarily, have been some who held more radical views, as the local Major General James Berry

[5] Coleby, *Hampshire,* pp.17-19. Roberts, *Devon*, p.xii, p.25.

did. What can be ascertained, however, from the evidence available, is that Shropshire was not a hotbed of Independents, for although Berry voiced his concerns about his local assistants, and four MPs were initially excluded from Parliament in 1656, local men continued to have the acceptance of the county's population and carried on in local affairs as before. Certainly, none voiced any radical opinions, apart from Humphrey Edwards, the only real survivor of Pride's Purge, who lasted for one term in Parliament, and seemed to have no impact at a local level. Even Wareinge, who was allegedly an Anabaptist, never seemed to espouse any radical views in public at least. Many men on the various committee, such as William Crowne, Thomas and Humphrey Mackworth junior seem to have been appointed due to either familial or business connections, as had usually been the case during the reign of Charles I.[6] What has become increasingly apparent throughout this work however, is that those involved in administering the county throughout the whole period studied, whether they be royalist or parliamentarian, not one came from the Whitchurch or Wem areas, in fact very few resided north of Shrewsbury. Some of the exceptions were Sir Vincent Corbet, Viscount Kilmorrey, Sir John Corbet, Robert Clive, Andrew Lloyd and Robert Powell, but they mainly resided in the north east and north west of the county, and the north bordering on to the Cheshire plain saw no representation with the possible exception of John Wybunbury and William Cotton. As to why this should be the case is unclear and needs further research.

The Protectorate years saw some changes in personnel, often due to death, old age and disillusionment. It was also a time of royalist rebellions, which were quashed by county men, aided by their counterparts from Flintshire and Montgomeryshire, and without any assistance from central government. Yet this self-sufficiency did not prove that the county was isolationist, as during the several rebellions that took place during the period the governors Mackworth and Botterell were not afraid to ask for help from central government. It was only in the closing months of the Protectorate, at the 1658 elections, that some Shropshire MPs who had obvious royalist connections appeared in county governance. None had taken up arms against Parliament, apart from Samuel Baldwyn who had overseen the royalist garrison at Stokesay, but they had connections which would have barred them from taking their seats under the

[6] *CC*C, Part 1, p.180,p.243. SA:LB/7/1942. SA:LB/2/1/1/, p.233. H.T. Weyman, 'Shrewsbury Members of Parliament,' *TSANHS*, 4th Series, Volume 12, (1929-30), pp.213-4. SA:3365/599/25.

Instrument of Government. These appointments were seemingly not through necessity, as was seen in other counties, so presumably it was either felt that sufficient time had passed for former royalists to have rehabilitated themselves, or because freeholders realised that there was a good possibility that monarchy would be restored. What was certain was that throughout all the upheavals, there was little personal animosity, and trade and land deals between those of both sides carried on as before.

In general, those men who, during the Interregnum, had been promoted into positions that they would not normally have held under monarchical rule, returned to their normal lives at the restoration. In fact, most of the men who had been involved in the local administration of the Protectorate were slowly weeded out by those who had remained loyal to the crown and who after 1660 now held the balance of power. Some did stay on, so there was not the mass purge of county officials at the restoration that there had been in 1645, and the corporate administration continued as it had done for the past twenty years. The return of the King meant that the county committee system was abolished, and it was only the Commission of the Peace that remained to oversee local needs. In central government, although most of the MPs who sat in the Convention Parliament came from royalist families, there were some, namely Thomas Jones and Job Charlton, who had been committeemen during the Protectorate.

It is difficult to make any comparison between the society and administration of Shropshire and other counties. No two counties are the same, nor is the surviving archival evidence required to make any such assessment the same in every area researched. The fact is that Shropshire showed many similarities with other counties, but also that there were many differences. There are several common features between Shropshire and its fellow marcher counties Cheshire and Gloucestershire. None of those counties had any resident peers who took an interest in county affairs, and it was the middling gentry who effectively administered their respective areas. The only difference was that in Cheshire far fewer families rose to prominence after the Dissolution of the Monasteries than in the two cloth producing counties of Shropshire and Gloucestershire. During the civil wars, Shropshire was held for the crown throughout, whereas in the most part Gloucestershire initial allegiance was to Parliament as was

Cheshire's, apart from Chester which supported the King. Unlike Shrewsbury, but much like the other Shropshire corporations, Gloucester saw no real changes in its personnel during the war years and beyond. In Cheshire the new justices came from the middling gentry who had less familial and social ties with each other than those who sat before the war. Shropshire showed a similar pattern, but it also appointed those who could not be considered to be part of the gentry class, however minor, as it included burgesses and other town officials on its commissions. [7] At the restoration the gentry families who had been long established on the Commission of the Peace returned to what they regarded as their rightful positions, and the services of the Parliament men who had conducted local affairs during the Commonwealth and Interregnum were gradually dispensed with.

In conclusion, this thesis has shown that Shropshire was a county that was both open and politically-aware with a mix of men involved in local administration, who made no bones about voicing their disagreements with either the crown or Parliament. This probably came from the independence of spirit initially fostered under the palatine status that the county held, that seems to have survived over the centuries despite large amounts of royal privileges being bestowed. The granting of charters had allowed the county to thrive economically, yet it did not automatically foster loyalty to the King, for as we have seen there were some who were very vocal in their opposition to Charles I's impositions of the ship money assessment and muster master's fees, as well as his desire to promote an arminian style of worship within the county. Throughout the first civil war there were few who wavered in their loyalty to one side or another, yet many took the path of least resistance. Despite these deep divisions, there seemed to be no real animosities between the sides at the end of the conflict. However, the royalist gentry who had played such a great part in county affairs up until 1646 were no longer welcome on the county committees and in parliamentary seats until after the death of Oliver Cromwell, when there seemed to be a slow acceptance that sufficient time had passed for suitable gentlemen to resume their roles. Similarly, at the restoration, some parliamentarians continued to take part in local issues, even surprisingly Samuel More, that stalwart of the republic. The restoration signified a return to the natural

[7] John Morrill, *Cheshire*, pp.233-234. Warmington, *Gloucestershire*, pp.102-103.

order of things for the gentry, but, despite the lack of personal animosities and the fact that trade between the formerly opposing sides returned to normal, it would be a good twenty years before all differences had been forgotten.

# Appendix A

## Sheriffs of Shropshire 1641-1661

1641 Thomas Niccolls of Boycott

1642 John Weld of Willey

1643 Henry Bromley of Shrawardine

1644 Thomas Edwards of Greet

1645 Francis Ottley of Pitchford / Thomas Mytton of Halston

1646 Thomas Mytton

1647 Robert Powell of the Park

1648 William Cotton of Bellaport

1649 Thomas Baker of Sweeney

1650 William Fowler of Harnage Grange

1651 Sir Edward Corbet of Longnor

1652 Francis Forrester of Dothill

1653 George Norton of Church Stretton

1654 Thomas Kinnersley of Badger

1655 Matthew Herbert of Bromfield and Oakley Park

1656 Thomas Hunt of Shrewsbury

1657 Edmund Waring of Humphreston

1658 Ditto

1659 Ditto

1660 William Oakeley of Oakeley

1661 John Walcot of Walcot

Source J.B. Blakeway, *The Sheriffs of Shropshire with their armorial bearings* (Shrewsbury, 1831).

# Appendix B

## Mayors of Shrewsbury 1641-1661

1641 Richard Gibbons

1642 John Studley, draper

1643 Robert Betton, junior

1644 Charles Benyon, gent.

1645 Thomas Niccolls, esq.

1646 Thomas Knight, draper

1647 Richard Llewellyn, tanner

1648 Owen George, mercer

1649 Thomas Hayes, draper

1650 John Prowde, draper

1651 Charles Benyon, gent.

1652 Richard Cheshire, draper

1653 Jonathon Rowley, draper

1654 John Cooke, dyer

1655 Adam Webb, draper

1656 John Lowe, draper

1657 Thomas Hunt, esq.,

1658 John Betton, gent.

1659 John Walthall, draper

1669 Andrew Vivers

1661 Richard Bagot, draper, displaced by the Act for Regulating Corporations.

Robert Forster, bookseller elected

Source H. Owen and J. B. Brickdale, *History of Shrewsbury*, Volume 1 (Shrewsbury, 1829).

# Appendix C

## The Six Classis of Shropshire

### First Classis

Shrewsbury: St Marys

St Julians

St Alkmunds

Abbey Foregate

St Chads

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sutton | Carston | Harley |
| Meole Brace | Westbury | Kenley |
| Hanwood | Uffington | Albrighton |
| Berrington | Upton Magna | Shawbury |
| Cound | Wroxeter | Ford |
| Condover | Atcham | Alberbury |
| Smethcott | Rodington | Stapleton |
| Pulverbatch | Worthern | Eaton Constantine |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pitchford | Ercall | Frodesley |
| Acton Burnell | Wrockwardine | Wellington |

## Ministers

James Betton, Worthern

Thomas Pagett, St Chads

Thomas Blake, St Alkmunds

Samuel Fisher, St Marys

Francis Garbet, Wroxeter

James Smith, Upton

Samuel Smith, Cound

Francis Wright, Wellington

## Laity

| | |
|---|---|
| Thomas Knight | John Prowde, draper |
| Adam Webb, draper | John Lloyd, draper |
| Humphrey Mackworth | Thomas Niccolls |
| Rowland Hunt | John Langley of Abbey Foregate |

Francis Forster, Watling Street

Richard Piggot, schoolmaster

Thomas Griffiths, Benthall

Edward Davies, Pennington

William Jones, Chilton

John Browne, Kesle

Thomas Hunt

John Corbet

Richard Charlton

## Second Classis

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Oswestry | Ellesmere | Llanymynech |
| Hordley | Llanyblodwell | Selatyn |
| Petton | Baschurch | St Martins |
| Ness Magna | Whittington | Felton |
| Ryton | Knockin | Kynnerley |
| Loppington | Myddle | Shrawardine |
| Montford | Fitz | Preston Gubbals |

### Ministers

Samuel Hilderson, Weston Felton

Rowland Nevett, Stanton upon Hine Heath

James Wilding, Selatyn

Joshua Richardson, Myddle

Stephen Lewis, Baschurch

Oliver Thomas, Oswestry

Francis Browne, Shrawardine

### Laity

Robert Powell

Thomas Clive

Thomas Mytton

John Wilcocks, schoolmaster, Oswestry

John Rogers of Middleton

Robert Corbet

Arthur Petton

Leighton Owen

Thomas Baker

Andrew Lloyd

Thomas Harris, Prescott

Edmund Bushop, Oswestry

## Third Classis

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bridgnorth | Quatt | Quatford |
| Albrighton | Stockton | Ryton |
| Sutton | Kemberton | Shifnal |
| Worfield | Kinlet | Monkshopton |
| Claverley | Barrow | Eaton |
| Highley | Hope Baggot | Priors Ditton |
| Wenlock Magna | Chetton | Tong |
| Wenlock Parva | Beckbury | Broseley |
| Madeley | Highley | Tasley |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Alveley | Glaseley | Whettle |
| Willey | Owlbury | Acton Round |
| Halesowen | Badger | Upton Cresset |
| | Sidbury and Billingsley | |

## Ministers

Gilbert Walden Bridgnorth

Joseph Sound, Shifnal

George Adney, Wenlock Parva

George Baxter, Wenlock Magna

John Spilsbury, Chetton

Edmund Paston, Halesowen

## Laity

William Pierrepoint

Richard Cresset

Lancelot Lee

Morris Overton and Joseph Sadler, bailiffs of Bridgnorth

Audley Bowdler, Arlscot

Richard Kettleby, Ribble

Hercules Kinnersley

Roger Rowley, Rowley

George Bishop, More

Humphrey Briggs

John Huxley of Broseley bailiff of Wenlock

## Fourth Classis

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wem | Prees | Waters Upton | Drayton |
| Ightfield | Whitchurch | Woore | Norton |
| Adderley | Hinstock | Cheswardine | Stoke on Tern |
| Ercall Parva | Hodnet | Moreton Say | Staunton |
| Moreton Corbet | Lee Brockhurst | | Uppington |
| Eaton on Wealdmore | Longdon on Tern | Preston on Wealdmore | |
| Buildwas | Dawley | Stirchley | Lilleshall |
| Edgmond | Aston | Longford | Tibberton |
| Wombridge | Leighton | Kynnersley | Chetwyn |
| | Newport | | |

## Ministers

Andrew Parsons, Wem

Francis Boughey, Hodnet

Thomas Porter, Whitchurch

Thomas Cook, Market Drayton

John Bisby, Edstaston

Peter Niccolls, Adderley

Aylmer Haughton, Prees

## Laity

Sir John Corbet

William Steventon, Preston

Rowland Hill, Soulton,

John Hotchkys, Whitchurch

Daniel Benyon

Thomas Brayne, Whixall

Creswell Tayleur

Joshua Witter, Whitchurch

Samuel Smith, Wem, mercer

Samuel Sandford, Twemloes

Robert Clive

William Cotton

William Golborne, Kenston

Richard Mason, Newtown

## Fifth Classis

Ludlow
Ashford Carbonell
Caynham
Ashford Bowdler
Burford
Greet
Coreley
Bitterley
Bromfield
Stanton Lacy
Clungunford
Hopton Wafers
Hopton in le Hole
Tugford
Holgate
Long Staunton
Margarets Clee
Stoke St Millborough
Botrells Aston
Abdon
Stokesay
Hawford
Milson
Cold Weston
Cleobury Mortimer
Eaton
Upper Neen
Scrivens Middleton
Cleobury North
Dowles
Lower Neen
Wistanstow

Ministers

John Rusbatch, Wistanstow

John Malden, Cleobury Mortimer

Dr Patrick Panter, Holgate

Edmund Barton, Culmington

Samuel Barker, Clungunford

---------- of Ludlow

Laity

Sir Adam Littleton

William Littleton

Thomas Kettleby

Robert Charlton

Edward Whichcott

Robert Kettleby

Edward Cresset

George Thompson, Sherehouse

John Aston

Isaac Shepheard, Bawcott

William Hill, Burrowston

William Walker, Staunton

## Sixth Classis

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Stretton | Cardington | Rushbury | Shipton |
| Munslow | Diddlebury | Weston | Bucknell |
| Clun | Mainstone | Bettwys | More |
| Bishop's Castle | Wentnor | Norbury | Hope Bowdler |
| Acton Scott | Myndtown | Lidbury | Edgton |
| Sibdon | Hopesay | Clunbury | Bedstone |

Stowe Llanfair Waterdine Shelve Rattlinghope

Leebotwood Chirbury Habberley Hopton

## Ministers

Thomas Froysell, Clun

George Barkley, Mainstone

George Lawson, More

Richard Heath, Hopesay

Edward Lewis, Chirbury

Anthony Hawkes, Stretton

## Laity

Sir Adam Littleton

William Littleton

Esay Thomas

Michael Stephens

Isaac Shepheard, Bawcott

Thomas More

William Billingsley, Bishop's Castle

Henry Holland, Purslow

Edward Baxter, Broughton

Harcourt Leighton

Samuel More

Henry Powell, Shadwell

Charles Langford, Shipton Castle

Francis Harris

Henry Harris, Stockton

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LB/11/4/76/16-19 and 31 – Quarter Sessions papers 1650

LB/11/4/78/1-27- Quarter Sessions papers 1651.

LB/11/4/79/37 – Quarter Sessions papers 1653.

LB/11/4/81/2 – Quarter Sessions papers 1655.

LB/11/4/82/18 – Quarter Sessions papers 1656.

LB/11/4/84/1 – Quarter Sessions papers 1657.

LB/11/4/85/12-15,19 – Quarter Sessions papers 1659.

LB/14/732-725 – Suits heard by the Council in the Marches of Wales.

## SB: Shrewsbury Borough pre-1835.

### Mayor's Accounts:

1642 - 3365/586

1643 - 3365/588/25- 26 – Wine and cakes for Lord Byron.

1644 – 3365/588/18 – Costs of powder work.

1644 - 3365/588/36 – Payment to Edward Jones.

1646 - 3365/588/2 - Discharge of account.

1647-48 - 3365/594/1- Discharge of account.

1656 - 3365/603/8,12,13,23 – Expenses incurred entertaining Major James Berry and his wife.

1656 - 3365/603/62 – Repairs to the pest house Kingsland.

Parish Records:

P83/B/1/1 - Cound.

P241/B/1/1/1 - Shawbury.

P250 C/1/1 - Holy Cross Shrewsbury.

P256/B/2/1/1 – St. Julian's, Shrewsbury.

P257, Fiche 101-113 – St. Mary's Shrewsbury.

P303/1/1/2 – Whitchurch.

P314/B/2/1 and 4-5 – Worfield.

Quarter Sessions papers:

3365/2241/4 – Commitment of Sarah Cropper.

3365/2241/5 – Petition of William Nash, gunsmith.

3365/2241/48 – Presentment of the constable of Bicton January 1644.

3365/2241/90 – Presentment for non-observance of Lent.

3395/2241/91 - Order by John Studley to the under officers of Stone ward.

3365/2241/92 - Order by John Studley to the under officers of Welsh ward.

3365/2241/93 - Order by John Studley to the under officers of Castle ward.

3365/2241/101-103 - Presentments for illegal ale selling 1643/44.

3365/2242/48,50, 61 and 77 - Presentments for illegal ale selling 1647/48.

3365/2243/25,26,45 and 46 - Presentments for illegal ale selling 1649/50.

3365/2244/31,51,52,61,62 - Presentments for illegal ale selling 1652/53.

3365/2246/63,65-69 - Presentments for illegal ale selling 1656.

3365/2247/73-74,83-84 - Presentments for illegal ale selling 1657.

3365/2248/63,65,67-70 - Presentments for illegal ale selling 1658.

3365/2250/58 – Quarter Sessions 1662.

Miscellaneous:

49/375 – Details of Eleazer Carswell.

49/422 - Richard Hoggins mortgage, 1667.

20/14/47-48, 65-66 – Herbert marriage agreement 1651 and lease noting Herbert's knighthood 1669.

215/63 – Charles Benyon bailiff of Shrewsbury.

215/70 – Appointment of Edmund Wareinge as governor of Shrewsbury.

228/3 – Auden's account of Clun during the Civil War.

327/2/2/73/2-3 – Wybunbury's land holdings.

465/230 – chief rents due to the Manor of Edgton (John Broom).

465/697-8 – Francis Sandford's commission and pass.

465/700 – Copy of Humphrey Sandford's conviction for recusancy 1647.

552/11/3129 – Historical account of Shrawardine castle.

1037/8/67 – Details of Richard Griffiths and Priamus Davies.

1514/113 - Bargain and Sale 1619 re Lacon.

1514/290 – Feoffment 1649 re Richard Meyre.

1514/294 – Counterpart lease 1655 re Thomas Lateward.

1831/1/11/6 – Draper's guild royal charter.

1831/1/1/4/17 – Drapers minute book.

2705/36 – Copy of court roll for the manor of Newlands (John Broom).

2922/11/1/99 - Assignment of mortgage by demise on the Boreatton estate.

2922/12/8/1 - Extract of the will of Rowland Heylin.

3365/1-3 – Town charters.

3365/4 – Town charter.

3365/5-12 – Town charters.

3365/16-17 – Town charters.

3365/36 – Town charter.

3365/39 – Foundation papers for Shrewsbury School.

3365/40-41 – Town charters.

3365/67 – Assembly Book A.

3365/68 - Assembly Book B.

3365/221 – Ship money assessments.

3365/519 – Bailiffs receipts.

3365/519A – Bailiffs receipts for tolls.

3365/581/7 – Fees paid for Quo Warranto warrants.

3365/582 - Charter costs.

3365/582/56 – Legal bill for Quo Warranto proceedings.

3365/2569/14 – Statement for Charles Benyon, Mayor, re maimed soldier's money, 1652.

3365/2639 - Petition to the town bailiffs.

3365/2641 - Monthly assessment of £70,000/ petitions to the mayor.

5460/8/2/2 – Cressett letter.

5586/11/1 – Whitmore family papers.

5735/2/1/12/15 and P/7/N/1/1 – Details of William Scott of Tong.

5981/A/64 – Court Baron Purslow hundred, 1631-2.

5981/A/91 – Henry Powell deputy steward Court Baron of Purslow

5981/B/2/298 and 302 – Land dealings between Charles Langford and others.

5981/C/464 – Charles Benyon's appointment of deputy sheriff.

6001/11/239 – Willey and other estates of the Welds.

6001/235 – Chronology of Civil War events.

6001/275 – St Chad's parish burial records.

6001/2345 – Shrewsbury Public Library Manuscripts, Whitchurch Records.

6001/13291/2 – List of proposals sent to the Earl of Bristol.

C.66 v. f LS 25851/1 - An Extract of *The Theatre of Britain* by John Speed (1627).

O 63 v.f. – Protestation returns 1641/42 for Bridgnorth and Wenlock franchise.

P/180/E/3/12 - ‘The state of business depending betweene Michael Richards and Josiah Peters.’

P303/F/1/1/2 – Details of Richard Whitehall.

PH/S/13/W/4A/7 – Photographs/ etchings of Whitehall various dates.

SA-IMG262 and WB/F/2/2/45/4/6, 50/6/2, 50/11/5 – Details of Michael Ould.

SA-IMG650 – Monumental inscription re Edmund Wylde.

SA-IMG1411 – Monumental inscription of the Thomas Jobber.

SA-IMG1673 – List of the mayors of Shrewsbury.

X151/7 – Details of Humphrey Walcot.

X7381/28/165 – Details of John Cotes.

X7381/76/392A – Appointment of Edmund Wareinge as governor of Shrewsbury.

XMI7334/1-3 – Details of Richard Bagot.

XLS 10772 – Article, Thomas Hancox, Ironworks at Bringewood.

XLS 14746 – Copy of a letter of the taking of High Arcall.

SCC HER Number (PRN) 00249 – Caus settlement.

SCC HER number (PRN): 00289 – Acton Burnell Parliament.

SCC HER number (PRN):00332 – Oswestry Parliament.

SCC HER Number (PRN):00750 – Blast furnace (Shifnal).

SCC. HER Number (PRN): 01473 – Mardol Quay.

SCC HER Number (PRN) 01487 – Cadogan’s fort.

SCC HER Number (PRN) 01499 - Pest house Kingsland.

SCC HER Number (PRN):03515 – Blast furnace (Cleobury Mortimer).

SCC. HER Number (PRN): 03860 – Blast furnace (Donnington Wood).

SCC HER number (PRN):04696 – Frankwell Quay.

SCC HER number (PRN):07631- Lanvorda estate.

SCC HER Number (PRN): 08392 - Bennett’s Hall.

SCC. HER Number (PRN): 10298 – The Sextry, Shrewsbury

SCC HER number (PRN): 10319 – Ireland’s mansion.

SCC HER Number (PRN): 10399 – Prince’s mansion, Whitehall.

SCC. HER Number (PRN): 13238 – Plaish Hall home of the Leighton family.

SCC. HER Number (PRN): 13355 – Pitchford Hall home of the Ottley family.

SCC HER Number (PRN): 16784 – Kilhendre Hall home of the Edwards family.

### Wenlock Borough Records Pre-1835:

Wenlock Minute Book – yet uncatalogued - p.711 - Discharge of Francis Smith for delinquency.

665/5862 – Translation of Charles I's charter.

1037/19/18 – Town charter.

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WB/F/2/2/13/2/9 – John Huxley, bailiff.

WB/F/2/2/19/8/4 – Francis Simkis v Thomas Bullock.

WB/F/2/2/19/8/9 – Francis Garland v Francis Carter.

WB/F/2/2/19/8/19 – Thomas Wellins v John Higginson.

WB/F/2/2/21/1/12 – Roger Roe v Edward Bishop.

WB/F/2/2/21/10/13 – William Jukes witness summons.

WB/F/2/2/22/9/32 – Hewes v Downes.

WB/F/2/2/22/3/27 – John Horton's case.

WB/F/2/2/40/1/10 – Richard Gough v Thomas Richardson.

WB/F/2/2/43/4/2 – Mullard case.

WB/F/2/2/44/10/7 – Hosier v Easthope.

## Staffordshire Archives:

D268/2/37 - Letter from Shropshire commissioners of Array.

D593/C/4/5 (26/512) – Leveson landholdings.

D593/C/5/1 (28/518) - Leveson landholdings.

D593/P/8/1/4 – Summons issued by John Weld.

D868/2/41- Seven resolutions at Whitchurch.

D868/3/2 - Newport / Leveson correspondence.

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C231/5 – Crown docket books, 1629-1643.

C231/6 – Crown docket books, 1643-1660.

E36/ 150 f.o. 23v and 50 – Earl of Stafford's attainder.

E214/124 – Brooke's surrender of letters patent.

E214/163 – Brooke's right to cut timber in the Forest of Dean.

E331/HEREFORD/4 - Certificates of livings, Hereford Diocese, 1605-1609.

E331/HEREFORD/9 – Certificates of livings, Hereford Diocese, 1629-1634.

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REQ 2/3/311 – Matthew Harward and Richard Jenkyns v Sir Richard Brereton and others.

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SP23/62/364 – Sir Richard Lee.

SP23/107/173. SP23/175/ 712. SP23/3/392. SP23/107/158-159. SP23/196/570. SP23/3/38 – Sir Richard and Francis Newport.

SP23/166/217-219 – Rowland and Sylvanus Morris, Bridgnorth.

SP23/166/ 231 – George Farmer Eaton, Eaton Mascott, and Thomas Talbot, Bridgnorth.

SP23/166/231-235 and 239 – John Synge, Bridgnorth.

SP23/174/385 – Sir Humphrey Walcot.

SP23/176/43-45. SP23/3/39-40 – Thomas Chaloner, Shrewsbury.

SP23/176/681. SP23/3/50 – Lawrence Benthall, Benthall,

SP/23/184/43-45 – Richard Oakeley, Oakeley.

SP23/187/480. SP23/6/122 – Sir Francis Ottley.

SP23/192/702. SP23/3/313. SP23/6/112 – Sir Vincent Corbet.

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SP23/198/244. SP23/4/38 - Sir Thomas Wolryche.

SP23/198/427. SP23/4/38 – Francis Thornes.

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